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THE R̥GVEDIC ĀDITYAS

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TO MY PARENTS

CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Introduction	1
The Identity of the Ādityas	1
The Number of Ādityas	3
Summary and Thesis	6
Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman	8
I. Mitra	16
<u>mitrá</u>	25
Summary	43
Mitra in the Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas	45
II. Varuṇa	63
<u>vratá</u>	70
<u>váruṇa</u>	81
Varuṇa	92
Varuṇa: Lord of Waters	102
Summary	126
Varuṇa in the Later Veda	127
Varuṇa, the god who binds	128
Varuṇa, god of the waters	142
Varuṇa as king and lord of <u>dhárman</u>	145
The Development of Varuṇa in the Veda	146
III. Aryaman	150
Aryaman	170
Summary	181
Aryaman in the Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas	183

IV. Aditi	192
Aditi and Āditya	192
^á aditi	196
The Goddess Aditi	208
Excursus I: Agni and Aditi	221
Aditi as Mother	231
Excursus II: upásthē ^á diteḥ	238
Aditi as Mother in the Later Veda	241
Summary	249
V. Āditya	251
Guardians of Right Behavior	252
Opposition to Offense (^á gah) and Guilt (^é nah)	252
Opposition to Deception	259
Support for the Truth and Opposition to Untruth	262
Protectors of the Righteous	266
Rulers of Men	277
Rulers over the World	284
Summary and Conclusions	287
VI. The Other Ādityas	293
The Viśve Devāḥ	293
Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras	294
The Minor Ādityas	298
Dakṣa	299
Bhaga	300
Amśa	307
Savitar	308
Sūrya	314
Summary	317

VII. Summary and Conclusion	320
Final Perspectives	326
Abbreviations of Periodicals and Series	329
Bibliography	330
Subject Index	341
Text Abbreviations	345
Index of Passages	346

PREFACE

The heavens and earth of R̥gvedic India held many gods of various kinds and with different powers. For some, natural forms gave them their identities and defined their scope. Others, like Agni and Soma, were manifest principally in the Vedic rites, though their powers, like the rites themselves, reached to heaven. Indra was unique: he was a god, a warrior, a hero, a priest, and a king. He alone of the gods had a developed mythology which told of his exploits in creating and defending a world for his worshippers. Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, the three principal Ādityas, were yet another, quite different type. They did not represent the powers of nature, though their power might be expressed through nature. They were not visible or accessible like Agni and Soma, though these two gods could assume their names and, for a time, thus make them manifest. Like Indra, they were kings, but not as heroes or warriors. Their kingship was founded on order and justice, for they were gods of principles, principles which governed social roles within the family and the community.

This book will be a study of these three gods and their various functions in society and the world. In this respect, I have tried to advance a substantial body of scholarship on the Ādityas, for these gods have repeatedly challenged interpreters of Vedic religion. If this work offers a different perspective on them, it is in the attempt to understand them as Ādityas, the name which these three--and, for the most part, just these three--share. That name distinguishes them from other gods and defines them as a category of gods. My intention is to specify the distinctive features which set the Ādityas apart from other gods and unite them to

one another.

I have already suggested their common nature: they were the gods of social principles. More specifically, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman were the gods of alliances, commandments, and custom respectively. They thus governed in three complementary spheres. Mitra protected all relationships, whether between men or among gods and men, which were founded on mutual responsibilities. These relationships might be voluntary or involuntary, but they always involved some element of exchange. Varuṇa governed relationships between those properly in authority and their subjects and enforced the authority of the truth (ṛta), which was the standard for action and speech. Finally, Aryaman guarded relationships determined by tradition and by custom. It was precisely this fact, that they governed such principles of social behavior, that made them Ādityas. This name was derived from the word āditi, which was both the name of a goddess, who was the mother of the Ādityas, and a concept meaning "blamelessness" or "innocence." The three gods were Ādityas, offspring of Aditi and āditi, because they upheld the principles which defined right and wrong, innocence and blame.

This work is not only about the gods; it is also about the people and the society they governed. The Ādityas were kings not only because they ruled, but also because they ruled in the way a Vedic king did. Their kingship in heaven imaged kingship on earth. The basis of their kingship was the power to maintain proper human relationships: to watch, to judge, and either to punish or pardon. They thus reflected one side of Vedic kingship, the role of the king as judge, which complemented that of the warrior-king Indra. While the king upheld all three kinds of relations represented by the Ādityas, his special concern was the realm of commandment and authority, the sphere of

Varuṇa, for it was on the preservation of legitimate authority that his position depended. Thus, of the three Ādityas, it was Varuṇa who showed in his character and functions the ideal of Vedic kingship. Therefore, by examining the roles of Varuṇa in the RV and his transformations in the late Veda, we can see the nature and evolution of this idea.

The lifetime of these three gods in the religious literature of India was not long. They did not die, of course, for nothing wholly dies in Hinduism, but rather changed form. Already in the later Veda and the Epics, their characters were diffused and their names applied to a variety of roles. Thus, Aryaman and Mitra were identified with the sun. In fact, "Mitra" eventually became virtually a name of the sun. Varuṇa retained something of his old character: he still was addressed as king and as the avenger of evil. But he also became lord of the waters, or elsewhere an almost demonic, threatening figure to be feared and avoided. Though their role in religious and social life thus became almost negligible, the powers they represented continued after them. The dharma became the rule for human life, and the task of defending that dharma fell not only to other gods, but also and principally to the inevitable workings of karma. Personalized powers, like the Ādityas, were then extraneous, for there was no need for such avenging spirits, watching over the actions of men. But while that need still existed, while they still represented the principles on which human interaction depended, they were an essential and central part of the divine world.

The core of this book is based on research done for my 1975 doctoral thesis, written under the direction of Professor Stanley Insler at Yale. I am very grateful for his help then and for his continuing example and advice. Since the completion of the thesis, I have revised, rearranged, and enlarged

this work in order to clarify and further support my arguments and to contribute to a more general understanding of Vedic religion. During the years spent on this project, I called upon the support of many people. I especially wish to thank my colleagues Elaine Pagels and Barbara Stoler Miller for their encouragement and René Campos for enduring this work and me. Finally, I am indebted to Professor Ernest Bender and the editors for the American Oriental Society for agreeing to consider a rough copy of this work and then waiting patiently for the final version.

INTRODUCTION

The Ṛgvedic Ādityas have long intrigued Vedic scholars. These gods have been studied both individually and collectively. Their relationship to other Ṛgvedic, Iranian, and even Indo-European gods has been explored. Nonetheless, the task of final consolidation has yet to be accomplished, and fundamental questions remain unanswered. What is it that unites the principal Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman? What do each of these gods represent, and what distinguishes them from one another? Until these questions are satisfactorily answered, our understanding of these gods and that important segment of Vedic religion centered on them will remain incomplete.

The first problem is to establish just exactly who the Ādityas are and what sort of group they form. Therefore, I begin with the Ṛgvedic evidence for the identity and number of these gods.

The Identity of the Ādityas

Where an explicit identification occurs, ādityā́ in the plural normally refers to just or at least Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. Examples are VII 60.4bcd ā́ sū́ryo aruhac chukráṁ árṇaḥ, yásmā ādityā́ ádhvano rádanti, mitró aryamá́ várūṇaḥ sajóṣāḥ "The sun has mounted (his) bright flood (of light), he for whom the Ādityas--Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman--dig out the roads in agreement;" and VII 51.2ab ādityáso áditir mādayantām, mitró aryamá́ várūṇo rájīṣṭhāḥ "Let Aditi and the

Ādityas--Mitra, Aryaman and Varuṇa--rejoice, they who are most righteous."

Even in II 27, in which vs. 1 names five Ādityas, the remainder of the hymn mentions only these three as Ādityas. In the dual, Āditya refers to Mitra and Varuṇa, as in I 136.3, II 41.6, V 67.9, and 69.4.¹ In the singular, it is normally a designation of Varuṇa,² although exceptions are not infrequent. In the only hymn in the RV addressed solely to Mitra, III 59, that god is called an Āditya in vss. 2, 3, and 5.

Besides Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, however, several other gods are called Ādityas at least once. These are: the gods in general (X 63); Dakṣa (II 27.1); Aṃśa (II 27.1); Bhaga (II 27.1; VIII 18.3, cf. VII 41.2); the Maruts (X 77.2); Indra (VIII 52 [Vāl.4].7); and possibly Savitar (VIII 18.3).³ In contrast to these gods whose identification as Ādityas is rare, one god, Sūrya, is called an Āditya (or 1x Āditeya) rather frequently (I 50.13, 163.3, 191.9; VIII 101.11; X 88.11). In the AV, Āditya in the sgl. refers all but once to him, and this usage is continued into classical Sanskrit where Āditya means simply "sun."

Thus, while the term Āditya is most closely associated with Mitra,

¹Grassmann (1872: sp. 176) cited a single exception in which he believed that "the two Ādityas" refers to Indra and Varuṇa. This passage is VII 85.4ab sá sukrátur rtacíd astu hótā, yá āditya śávasā vāp nāmasvan. There is no reason to read dual ādityā with the Pp. as Grassmann does. Although most of the hymn is addressed to both Varuṇa and Indra, in this verse the poet simply turns to that god in whose proper provenance his request for a hotar who understands the truth would most naturally fall, i.e., to Varuṇa. The verse, therefore, translates: "Let him of good intentions, who understands the truth, be our hotar, o Āditya, him who shall offer reverence and might for you two."

²Cf. I 24.15, 25.12, II 28.1, IV 1.2, and VII 84.4.

³Mārtāṇḍa is called a son of Aditi in X 72.8, but this is a special case, as I hope to show later.

Varuṇa, and Aryaman, it is not restricted to them alone. Other gods can be called Ādityas, at least under some circumstances. In the earlier parts of the RV, these gods are personifications of abstract concepts: Bhaga "Fortune," Dakṣa "Skill," Aṃśa "Share," Savitar "Compeller." Only in the later strata of the text is this name applied to the gods in general, Indra, the Maruts, and the sun.

The Number of Ādityas

Attempts to fix the number of Ādityas in the RV have not been successful. And small wonder, for as Hillebrandt has rightly observed, the idea of a particular number of Ādityas is a concept not found in the first eight books of the RV.⁴ The lists of three (VII 60.4, 51.2, etc.) or five (VIII 18.3 [?]) or six (II 27.1) Ādityas do not establish the total number of Ādityas, since it is nowhere suggested that these lists are comprehensive.⁵ Nor is there any reason to understand the gods so named as members of a larger group--a group nowhere catalogued in the RV--which makes up the totality of Ādityas.⁶ The passages simply state that the gods there mentioned are Ādityas.

Only three passages in the RV refer to a specific number of Ādityas (IX 114.3; X 72.8f.; VIII 52 [Vāl.4].7). The verse most

⁴Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 88. Cf. Güntert 1923: 179.

⁵Cf. Oldenberg 1917: 178f. n.2. Even Hillebrandt took these passages to mean that there were exactly five or six Ādityas.

⁶As Oldenberg 1917: 178f. n.2 and Geiger 1916: 134f. n.2 suggested.

crucial to the debate on the number of Ādityas is IX 114.3:

IX 114.3a-d saptá díśo nānāsūryāḥ
 saptá hótāra ṛtvíjaḥ
 devā ādityā yé saptá
 tébhiḥ somābhí rakṣa naḥ

Seven are the directions, each with its own sun. Seven are the ceremoniants and hotars. With these, who are the seven gods, the Ādityas, guard us, Soma.

According to Oldenberg and Geiger, this verse shows that, in the oldest conception, the total number of Ādityas was seven.⁷ First, however, this verse is not particularly early.⁸ Without other supporting evidence, therefore, it can not be assumed that the verse testifies to anything archaic. Also, as Hillebrandt (1927-29 II: 87) has pointed out, the verse plays on the holy number seven, for it names the "seven directions" and the "seven hotars" as well as the seven Ādityas. The number seven is often used in the RV for sacred objects of all sorts or simply as a symbol for a large number. In the IXth maṇḍala alone, there are references to seven (priestly) conceptions (dhītáyāḥ, IX 8.4, 9.4), perhaps also symbolized as seven sisters (IX 66.8, 86.36) or seven mothers (IX 103.4). There are seven streams (síndhavaḥ, IX 9.6, 66.6), seven cows (IX 86.25),⁹ seven ṛṣis (IX 62.17, 92.2, 103.3), and seven

⁷Oldenberg 1917: 178f. and Geiger 1916: 134f. n.2. Cf. also Roth 1852: 75; Darmesteter 1877: 82ff.; v. Schroeder 1914-16 I: 406; Keith 1925 I: 98f.

⁸Arnold (1905) assigned it to what he called the "Popular RV," which is probably the latest portion of the RV.

⁹Cf. IX 86.21 and 70.1, in which the cows are three times seven.

institutes of the worship (yajñásya saptá dhāmāni, IX 103.2). Elsewhere, the sun god has seven horses; Bṛhaspati seven cows; Varuṇa seven sisters; Agni seven rays; Agni's horses seven colts, etc.¹⁰ There is no indication that the reference to seven Ādityas in IX 114.3 is any different from these others and that it evidences an ancient conception of the Ādityas as forming a group of seven.¹¹

In support of his position, Oldenberg also cited X 72.8f., which mentions the eight sons of Aditi. The last son, however, is Mārtāṇḍa, who is rejected by Aditi.¹² Her true sons, as Oldenberg correctly argues, are thus seven. But all this really shows is that the number seven represents completeness. That Mārtāṇḍa is born as the eighth, as one too many, symbolizes his imperfection and anomalousness. Further, these verses are highly dubious sources for any ancient conceptions. RV X 72 is a late and highly speculative hymn, a composition which mixes various elements in original ways.

The only other Ṛgvedic passage which even suggests a particular number of Ādityas is in the RV khila, VIII 52 (Vāl. 4).7. This verse invokes Indra as the "fourth Āditya" (túrīyāditya). Clearly, the poet has only brought Indra into association with Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman by making him an Āditya also. There is no reason to interpret the verse as evidence for an old group of exactly three Ādityas.

¹⁰See Güntert 1923: 178.

¹¹Also in TS II 3.1.5, the Ādityas are ritually bound to seven pegs of aśvattha wood. Here again, however, the number seven is chosen because of its symbolic value, not because the Ādityas are known to number exactly seven. Note that in the yājñika's comment on this rite, he says that there are also seven Maruts.

¹²For a detailed discussion of these verses, see below pp. 244f.

The particular numbers of Ādityas that appear in later Vedic texts show no compelling consistency, a fact which again points to the lack of any strong tradition. AV VIII 9.21 says there are eight sons of Aditi, probably under the influence of RV X 72, and TB I 1.9.1-3 names eight: Dhātār, Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aṃśa, Bhaga, Indra, and Vivasvat. However, the usual number of Ādityas in the Brāhmaṇas is twelve, and this is also the figure which appears in later literature. Whether, as is probable, this number is based on the number of syllables in jagatī verse¹³ or the number of months in the year¹⁴ does not matter. The important point is that these numerical speculations reflect nothing old or original in the conception of the Ādityas.

Summary and Thesis

The term Āditya, then, characteristically designates Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman, but it is not exclusively reserved for them. It can be occasionally applied to a variety of gods. Accordingly, the RV does not know a specific number of Ādityas. The numbers given in the text are either symbolic or not comprehensive. All this suggests that Āditya is descriptive, that it is used of gods when they show common traits or functions. If so, then Āditya must have some meaning: there must be some reason for calling a god an Āditya.

¹³ Oldenberg 1917: 178f, n.2, cf. TS I 1.9.3.

¹⁴ Keith 1925 I: 99, cf. ŚB XI 6.3.8.

In order to explore these possibilities, I shall examine the gods who are characteristically called Ādityas and the contexts in which the word ādityá itself occurs. Through doing so, I hope to establish the following points. First, the Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, are all gods of principles which govern society and social relationships. Mitra is the god of alliances, that is, he ensures that men will abide by the reciprocal relationships and agreements they have assumed. Similarly, Varuṇa is the god of commandments, or authority, for he decrees the proper way of action for men and makes certain that his ordinances are kept. He is the divine image of the authority of the king, whose position is enhanced and justified by this correspondence between the earthly and heavenly worlds. Finally, Aryaman is the god of customs. He ensures that men will follow those principles which are not established by agreement or by fiat, but which have been handed down from generation to generation. He symbolizes the power of the traditions to which a member of Vedic society must adhere.

But the functions of these gods go beyond the organization and maintenance of society. All three gods, but more particularly Varuṇa, become lords over the workings of the natural world as well. They order the world and establish the courses for its elements. They prosper their worshippers, especially by sending the rains. However, all these functions can be explained in terms of the fundamental characters assigned them.

Then I turn to the use of ādityá in the RV. My purpose will be to determine the relationship between this epithet and the various functions of the gods which bear it. In my view, ādityá points to the fundamental characters of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as guardians

over society. This hypothesis is supported by an analysis of the word ādityá and a study of its use in the RV. The word itself is derived from āditi and is equivalent to the phrase "son of āditi." The term āditi is employed both as a substantive meaning "innocence" or "blamelessness," and as the name of a goddess, who is virtually Innocence personified. An Āditya, therefore, is a "son of innocence," who supports or manifests the principles which define innocence. As the gods of alliances, commandments, and customs, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman exactly fit this description.

This interpretation of ādityá is also supported by the use of the word in the RV, for the term usually appears in contexts in which Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman act as avengers of evil-doing, guardians of those who act according to the principles they uphold, and lords over human activity. These are the functions that derive directly from their fundamental characters.

The final chapter concerns the gods other than Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, who are called Ādityas. By and large, these bear this name because they govern human affairs in a way similar to that of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. Exceptions to this are largely restricted to the latest portions of the RV, in which a shift in the meaning of ādityá is apparent.

Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman

The central part of this work, therefore, is a study of the characters and functions of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. These three gods have been studied by many scholars at many times, and the result has been many different interpretations. It is necessary, therefore, for me to state the method and principles on which my views are based.

The interpretation of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman is founded principally on the descriptions of them in the RV itself. This text, however, is not culturally isolated, but is both part of a tradition stemming back to times before the division of the Indo-Iranian peoples and the first religious literature of the unique culture of India. Evidence from Vedic India's sister culture in Iran and from the Vedic texts later than the RV, principally the other Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, might, therefore, provide considerable help in interpreting the RV. It is of major importance, however, exactly how and to what extent such evidence is used (or ignored), for the RV interpreted through comparison with ancient Iran or other Indo-European cultures is very different from that seen as part of a basically homogeneous Vedic tradition.

I use both Iranian and young Vedic material in my interpretations, but I attempt to do so with considerable critical reserve. The two most important Iranian texts for the study of the Ādityas are the Gāthās of Zarathuštra and the Avestan hymn to Mithra, Yašt X. The former can be very valuable for the interpretation of the RV, for the vocabulary, diction, and style of these hymns all show that Zarathuštra writes out of a tradition very similar to that of the Ṛgvedic poets. If any doubt of their affinity to the RV remains, it is certainly dispelled by the recent translation of the Gāthās by S. Insler, whose detailed analyses show that while Zarathuštra was an innovative religious reformer, his modes of expression parallel those of the RV. Accordingly, I have used the compositions of Zarathuštra in the few instances where it is possible to support an interpretation of cognate Ṛgvedic terms,

but I have not gone further than this. In particular, I have not tried to equate the Aməša Spəntas with the Ādityas or Ahura Mazda with Varuṇa. The relationship between these divinities is problematic and can not be safely used in the exposition of either group.

The evidence of the young Avesta is rather more difficult to evaluate. Yašt X, like many of the other Yašts, reflects the syncretism of the reformed religion of Zarathuštira with the pre-Zarathuštiran Iranian tradition. Since the descriptions of Mithra in the Yašt do accord with those of Mitra in the RV, I have used its substantial information about the nature of Mithra to supplement and interpret the scantier evidence of the RV. I have tried to be somewhat conservative in doing so, however, for the Avestan hymn comes from another time and another place than the RV, and the figure of Mithra may have acquired or lost certain characteristics or functions. Where the RV gives no indication of a specific quality or characteristic of the god, therefore, I have not posited its existence in India on the basis of the Iranian evidence alone.

The texts of the young Veda which might have bearing on the problem of the Ādityas are far more numerous and difficult to evaluate. Certainly the RV can not be isolated from the rest of the Vedic corpus, but the Vedic tradition was anything but static during the centuries of its composition and compilation. Indeed, the RV itself is a collection of hymns from different periods and therefore even internally shows significant conceptual shifts and religious developments. Likewise, the later Veda shows a constant process of elaboration, reinterpretation, and adaptation, which changes the meaning and application of the myths, symbols, and rituals it describes. These texts are creating a tradition

as well as preserving one. It is thus impossible to cite uncritically their views or interpretations of Ṛgvedic verses or concepts. Great care must be taken to identify the special interests of these texts and their effects on the interpretation of the tradition handed down from the RV.

An evaluation of the later Veda's evidence can obviously take place only on a case to case basis, but in advance of this, we can note at least a few general developments. Some of these have been discussed in such works as Oldenberg's Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft and Lévi's La doctrine du sacrifice, but bear repeating here. In general, the gods of the Brāhmaṇas occupy a significantly different status than they do in the RV. The principal attention of the Brāhmaṇas is focussed on the ritual. It is through the ritual acts themselves that the transformations sought by priests are effected and not through the power of the gods. Indeed, it is to the sacrifice itself that the gods owe their power and immortality (cf. Lévi 1898: 36ff.). They do not so much respond to the worship as they are controlled by it (Oldenberg 1919: 13f.). With the diminution of their power, the gods lose some of their individuality and specific personality, which opens the way to often rather free associations and identifications with other powers controlled by the sacrifice. Most importantly, the Brāhmaṇas rationalize the Ṛgvedic pantheon by identifying the gods with visible and concrete powers at work in the world (Oldenberg 1919: 14). It is this process, already anticipated in the RV itself, which finally culminated in the reconstitution of the Ṛgvedic gods as a pantheon of nature deities and the assignment of each of the gods to

a specific role in the natural world.

Such identification of the gods with other powers in the world is more than the result of Brāhmaṇic rationalization and reinterpretation; it is fundamental to the ritual purpose of the Brāhmaṇas. One of the basic aims of the ritual, according to Brāhmaṇic interpretation, is to create a structure of interrelationships, which is expressed in the symbolism of the sacrifice. The members of different categories of existence are equated with one another so that the world emerges as a coherent whole constructed out of constantly repeating, uniform patterns. In the Rājasūya, for example, the symbols of the ritual link all the elements of the world to the king, so that he stands as the "centre and pivot of the universe," indeed as "the universe itself" (Heesterman 1957: 224). It is through the king that the natural, social, and even divine worlds have unity and structure. But this structure comes into existence through the ritual which reveals it. Thus, for the yājñikas, meaning lies not so much in the individual ritual symbols, the gods, or the powers of nature, but in the organization which makes them coherent. This being so, we have to study Brāhmaṇic descriptions of a god carefully and ask whether these descriptions are the result of a clear conception of the god as a distinct personality or rather of priestly manipulation in constructing a coherent pattern of identifications.

This conception of the gods differs substantively from that of the RV. The attention of the Ṛgvedic ṛsis is on the gods, and power

¹⁵ The view that the gods of the Ṛgveda are nature gods profoundly influenced early Western interpretation. Cf., for example, Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology*, Hillebrandt's *Vedische Mythologie*, and Keith's *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*. But now, especially through the work of Oldenberg and much of current Ṛgvedic scholarship, the inadequacy and anachronism of this approach has been exposed.

is conceived as resting primarily with them. The gods, therefore, assume more distinct and coherent personalities than they do in the later texts. This coherence is maintained through the poets' consciousness that each of the gods has a basic character, which dictates the kinds of individual characteristics which the god will manifest and the different functions he will perform. This fundamental character, usually expressed in the god's name, gives unity and structure to his individual qualities. Thus, descriptions of a god in the RV normally relate to a pattern defined by the god's character, not to one defined by ritual symbols.

Such considerations do not vitiate the importance of the later texts for the interpretation of the RV. There are many continuities in the characteristics and functions of the gods, even in instances where their basic characters have changed. Then too, parts of the AV, some of the mantras of the YV, and even the later hymns of the RV itself occupy intermediate positions between the RV and the Brāhmaṇas. These observations only warn us that the Vedic texts can not be taken as a single entity, representing a single point of view, that the different texts demand somewhat different approaches, and that, in the final analysis, any interpretation of a Ṛgvedic god must rest primarily on the evidence furnished by the RV itself and not on any other text.

Accordingly, my analysis of the Ādityas depends on careful study of the Ṛgvedic references to them, and it ultimately stands or falls on the interpretation of individual passages. My procedure has been to determine the basic characters of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman by analyzing their names, for, as mentioned above, the name of a divinity is usually the best indication of his nature. In establishing the

significance of their names, I have tried to avoid dependence on etymologies, but have looked for evidence of the appellative meaning of these names from their use in the RV. Thus, it is ultimately a matter of indifference to my analysis from what root mi or mī the word mitrá comes or what the precise meaning of the IE root *wer, from which várūna is derived, might be. Vital to it, however, is that mitrá is actually used to mean "ally, alliance" and that the poets do perceive a close relationship between vrata "commandment, authority" and várūna.

Even when the meaning of the name of a god is determined, however, the relationship of the basic character of that god to the name may not be completely obvious. To say that the god is a "personification" of a certain entity or concept suggests a rather thinner and more superficial character than these gods often have. Consider Agni, for example. There is no question that the word agni means "fire," and that Agni's basic character must relate to fire. Sometimes Agni is hardly more than the visible fire itself, but at other times, the visible fire is rather the symbol of the god's activity (cf. Macdonell 1897: 88ff.). Thus, Agni races between heaven and earth (cf. RV IV 7.8, 8.4; VI 16.3; VIII 7.2; X 4.2, 98.11, etc.), just as the flames and smoke of the visible fire rise heavenward (cf. VI 15.2, VII 3.3, 16.3, etc.). Sometimes he is the divinity who exists in all the different manifestations of fire, but sometimes the poets speak of many Agnis (I 164.1; X 51.6). The character of the god is defined by the fire, but he is not entirely the personification of fire. He is a god, who not only is the fire, but who also manifests his power in the fire and acts beyond or behind the visible fire.

I introduce these comments in order to make clear what I mean by calling Varuṇa the "god of commandment," Mitra, the "god of alliances," and Aryaman the "god of customs." In the case of Mitra, Thieme (1957a: 1975) interprets the god as the personification of mitrá, which he translates "contract." So Mitra, according to him, is simply the god Contract. In substance I agree with him, but the representation of him as divine Contract is somewhat misleading. As will be made clear later, Mitra is the god who protects mutually binding compacts or alliances and who thus has the power to destroy violators of such obligations. He is not really a personification of the contract itself or of the power intrinsic to a sanctified alliance. "Alliance" defines his sphere of operation. Similarly, Varuṇa is not Commandment, but the god who can command, who has authority, and who ordains that commandments will be obeyed, and Aryaman is not Custom, but the god who watches over customs and ensures that they will be followed.

Having derived a working hypothesis about the basic nature of these gods, I have then sought to test that hypothesis against the descriptions of them in the RV and, to a lesser extent, in the later Veda. I have not included all of their functions or all of the descriptions of them, but have rather tried to isolate their principal characteristics. I have then compared these characteristics with the definitions of their basic characters to see how these form coherent wholes and to define more accurately their basic characters. In the case of Mitra, this method presents some difficulty, for he is so often joined with Varuṇa in the RV that it is difficult to isolate his distinctive characteristics. Yet it is on the interpretation of that god and the appellative meaning of mitrá that something of a scholarly consensus has emerged, and so I begin with this god.

MITRA

The post-Vedic Indian tradition knew Mitra as a name of the sun, and because Iranian Mithra appeared also to have a solar nature, Western scholarship of both the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generally took this correspondence as evidence that Mitra/Mithra was a sun-god already in the time before the division of the Indo-Iranian peoples.¹ Even in the early period of Vedic scholarship, however, this view was challenged. Another approach led Bergaigne to a somewhat different conclusion. Alongside the name Mitra, there is an appellative mitrá. Bergaigne suggested that this appellative might define the basic nature of the god. Since mitrá (m.), he said, meant "friend," therefore, "il semble que, dans une certaine mesure, Mitra soit . . . la divinité considérée sous son aspect bienfaisant, amical."² As a particular god, this "friendly" divinity often forms a pair with Varuṇa, with whom he shares many functions, but occasionally he reveals his distinctive character in opposition to Varuṇa. In these cases, Mitra usually represents that which is more easily accessible and pleasant for men; Varuṇa, that which is more remote and possibly dangerous. Thus, already in the RV, Mitra as the day is opposed to Varuṇa, the night. Mitra, the

¹For a detailed view of the literature and theories on Indo-Iranian Mitra/Mithra, see Schmidt 1978: 345ff. This paper appeared during the revisions of this book, and its conclusions substantially coincide with my own. I have edited my text to avoid repetition as much as possible, and I refer the reader to this article for further discussion.

²Bergaigne 1878-83 III: 110.

visible form of fire or soma, is contrasted to Varuṇa, the celestial forms of these two. Mitra as the inferior and closer god stands in opposition to Varuṇa, the superior and distant.³

Another challenge to the traditional view came from Meillet in his now famous article on Indo-Iranian Mitra/Mithra. Like Bergaigne, he began with the noun mitrá. He identified mitrá "ami, amitié" with Iranian miθra "contrat," Persian mīhr "amitié."⁴ Rejecting the naturalistic interpretations of his predecessors, he argued instead that Mitra was the personification of the concept which was the basis of Indo-Iranian *mitra, namely "contract."⁵ Thus, according to Meillet, Indo-Iranian *Mitra "est le contrat, la puissance mystique de contrat, et une personne."⁶ He then tried to justify this interpretation both etymologically⁷ and exegetically by showing how the characteristics of the god Mitra could be explained by the conception of him as the god Contract.

Although this thesis was by no means without its opponents,⁸ it eventually came to be accepted by scholars representing a variety of different approaches and interests,⁹ and it found an energetic defender

³Ibid., 116f., 136, 139.

⁴Meillet 1907: 144.

⁵The meanings "friend, friendship" can be explained as developments of the meanings "ally by contract" and "contractual alliance." Cf. Thieme 1957a: 18.

⁶Meillet 1907: 146.

⁷Following Brugmann, he derived mitrá from an Indo-European root *mei "exchange."

⁸Cf. Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 49 and Oldenberg 1917: 188f. See also Schmidt 1978: 346ff.

⁹E.g., Renou (1958: 50ff.), Gershevitch (1959a; especially 26ff.), (contd.)

in Paul Thieme.¹⁰ In recent years, however, Jan Gonda vigorously dissented in his monograph on the god Mitra¹¹ and his study of Mitra and the appellative mitrá.¹² Like Meillet and Thieme, Gonda based his interpretation of the god on the meaning of the word mitrá, which "expressed the main idea the god stands for." But according to him, this "main idea" is "the maintenance, without wrath or vengeance, of right, orderly relations, manifestations of which were, first and foremost, the active benevolence and willingness to help and redress."¹³ Or, more succinctly: "What is called mitram 'friend' or 'friendship,' whether denoting a person or an affective relation to a person, may be understood as manifestations or representations of the idea the god stands for."¹⁴ Essentially, therefore, Gonda returns to the position of Bergaigne.

Gonda draws on passages from many parts of the Vedic corpus to support this view of Mitra, but since my principal concern here is with Ṛgvedic Mitra, I will test Gonda's view against the evidence of the RV. Does Gonda's characterization of Mitra accurately reflect the descriptions of the god in this text? Is he, first of all, really as benevolent as Gonda makes him out to be? Mitra is surely not "without wrath," for his

Mayrhofer (KEW II: 633f.), Schlerath (1960a: 159). Dumézil (1940: 79ff.) endorsed it as well, though his discussion of Mitra basically followed Bergaigne.

¹⁰Cf. especially Thieme 1938: 134f., 1957a: 18ff., 1975.

¹¹Gonda 1972. Cf. also Gonda 1975.

¹²Gonda 1973.

¹³Gonda 1972: 112.

¹⁴Ibid., 113.

anger is mentioned several times in the RV. Cf. VII 62.4cd mā héle bhūma varuṇasya vāyór, mā mitrásyā priyátamasya nṛṇām "May we not fall into the anger of either noble¹⁵ Varuṇa, nor into that of Mitra (who is) first among those dear to men." Gonda (1972: 10f.) cites this passage, but merely comments that it is "remarkable." Indeed, it would be remarkable if Mitra were the personification of friendship, but not if he is the god who guards agreements made by men and who therefore becomes angry at those who do not adhere to these agreements. Further, Gonda¹⁶ has ignored Insler's¹⁷ convincing discussion of X 12.5, which also mentions Mitra's wrath:

X 12.5 kīṃ svin no rājā jagrhe kád asyā
 -ti vratām cakrma kó ví veda
 mitrás cid dhí śmā juhurāno devān
 chlóko ná yātām ápi *vāja¹⁸ ásti

Why is king (Varuṇa) complaining about us? Have we transgressed his commandment? Who knows? Even Mitra indeed is angry at us. The *din* (of the anger) of the gods is like the *din* of charioteers in a race.

While Mitra is among the gods who are closest to men (priyátama) and while his anger is more extraordinary than that of Varuṇa ("Even Mitra . . ."), nonetheless, there is nothing intrinsic in the nature of the god which would prevent him from becoming angry. So also, the poet

¹⁵The appearance of the god Vāyu would be inexplicable here, so it is better to read vāyóh as vā āyóh and take āyú as an adjective modifying Varuṇa.

¹⁶Gonda 1972: 17 n.3, which cites the passage incorrectly as X 12.2.

¹⁷Insler 1968a: 223.

¹⁸The text reads vājo which must be restored to vāja, cf. Insler 1968a: 223.

pleads for mercy from the anger of the three Ādityas in VIII 18.19ab vajñó hīló vo ántara, ādityā ásti mrláta "The worship is more dear than your anger, Ādityas. Have mercy!" If Mitra is somehow to be distinguished from the other Ādityas or from the other gods because he is especially friendly and kind, he fails to show this character in these passages. Anger and wrath are not foreign to him.

That the anger of Mitra is an old and established characteristic of the god is witnessed by the Avestan hymn to Mithra, Yast X. According to Yt X 47, Mithra is notorious for his anger (miθrām ... yim frasrūtām zaranimām). He does not suffer men to violate his principles: Yt X 18 yezi vā.dim aiwi družaiti ... fraša upa.scandayeiti, miθrō grantō upa. tbištō ... "If (anyone) deceives him, enraged and inimical, he comes forth to smash him."¹⁹ Here he is no "friendly" god, but one who is great and powerful in his anger.

Neither is Mithra "without vengeance" as Gonda claims. He is specifically called an avenger in VII 60.5ab imé cetāro ānrtasya bhūrér, mitró aryamā várūno hí sánti "These are the avengers²⁰ of substantial untruth, for they are Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa." Punishment by these three gods, including Mitra, is mentioned also in VII 52.2d mā tát karma vasavo yác cáyadhve "May we not do that, which you avenge, o Vasus (=Mitra, Varuṇa, and other unspecified gods)." Once again, this is a trait shared by Iranian Mithra; cf. Yt X 26 acaētārām miθrō.drujām "(Mithra), who is the avenger of those who deceive their alliances ..." and Yt X 35 aranat.caēšām "(Mithra), who avenges debts" The vengeful character

¹⁹Comparable descriptions occur also in Yt X 23, 39, 40, 43, 47, 63, etc.

²⁰For cetṛ, see Renou EVP IX: 55.

of Mitra/Mithra, therefore, is also an anciently established trait of the god.

Gonda's interpretation, therefore, is not acceptable, for Mitra is not the embodiment of kindness and benevolence. Rather, he is capable of both wrath and vengeance against those who violate the principles which he upholds. He can, of course, be benevolent, but this benevolence is not freely given. It must be earned by obedience to him, as in III 59.3cd ādityāsya vratām upakṣiyānto, vayām mitrásya sumatáu syāma "By abiding in the commandment of the Āditya, we would be in the good favor of Mitra." Those who revere Mitra and that for which he stands are under his protection: I 136.5abc yó mitráya varuṇāyāvidhaj jáno, 'narvāṇam tám pári pāto áphašo, dāśvāṇsam mártam áphaṣaḥ "Which man has honored Mitra and Varuṇa, that one, free of hostility, do they protect on every side from distress; that mortal who serves them (do they protect) from distress." Only by honoring these gods and the principles they represent can man win their favor.

The Mitra of the RV is not the personification of friendship, but rather a king, who is responsible for relationships established among men and among gods. This image of Mitra appears, for example, in III 59.8:

III 59.8 mitráya páñca yemire
jānā abhiṣṭiśavase
sá devān víśvān bibharti

The five peoples²¹ submit to Mitra who possesses the strength of superiority. He sustains all the gods (as well).

²¹The five peoples = the whole world, cf. Schlerath 1960a: 28ff.

Similar is V 63.3ab saṃrājā ugrā vṛṣabhā divās pātī, pṛthivyā mitrāvāruṇā vīcarṣaṇī "Mitra and Varuṇa, the two mighty, universal kings, the two bulls, the lords of heaven and earth who keep the peoples apart ..."
Elsewhere Mitra or Mitra and the other Ādityas are "those whose rule is good" (sukṣatṛā, VI 51.4); and the lords of the household and possessors of the truth among the people (V 65.2). They are "kings of the peoples" (rājānaś carṣaṇīnām, X 126.6), "kings who have power over the peoples" (rājānaś carṣaṇīsaḥaḥ, VIII 19.35), "supporters of the peoples" (carṣaṇīdhrītaḥ III 59.6; dhartārā carṣaṇīnām, V 67.2).²² In all these passages, the poets constantly reiterate that Mitra as king has the responsibility to keep the peoples in their proper place and relation to one another.

Again, the kingship of Mitra and his rule over men was an already established trait of the god in Indo-Iranian times. Cf. Yt XIII 95 miθrō ... fraōāt vīspā fratamatātō dahyunam, yaozaintīšca rāmayeiti ...
fraōāt vīspā fratamatātō dahyunam, yaozaintīšca nyāsāite "Mithra will prosper all the foremost authorities of the countries, for he will make peaceful those (countries) which are in turmoil. He will prosper all the foremost authorities of the countries, for he will stabilize those (countries) which are in turmoil." That is to say, Mithra, working

²²Thieme (1967: 233ff.) has convincingly argued that carṣaṇī and also krṣṭī can mean "border," "bounded region" and the "people within a bounded region." He suggests that carṣaṇī in some of these passages may mean "border," but I prefer to understand these all as depicting the gods described as lords over various peoples who are defined by boundaries. Cf. Schlerath 1960a: 39ff.

through human rulers, will restore peace and order to nations and peoples.

With the preceding descriptions of Mitra's rule over men also belong those passages, distinctive of Mitra, which speak of him as the god who "sets in place" or "organizes" (yat)²³ the peoples. Thus, V 65.6ab yuvām mitremām jānam, yātataḥ sām ca nayataḥ "You two, Mitra, organize and unite this people" and III 59.5ab mahāñ ādityāḥ ... yātayājjanah ... "(Mitra), the great Āditya, who organizes the people ..."²⁴ Similar also is III 59.1a mitró jānān yātayati bruvāṇāḥ "Mitra, when he is spoken [=invoked], organizes the peoples."^{25,26} In none of

²³I follow Oldenberg (1913: 127ff.) who shows that yatate means 'er stellt sich auf' and yatati, yatayati "jemandem die (rechte) Stelle anweisen." So also Schlerath (1960a: 37ff.), Thieme (1938: 41; 1957a, 39), Gonda (1972: 93ff.). For Avestan yat, see Benveniste 1964: 21ff. When used with Mitra, the transitive yat means, according to Thieme, "causes people to make mutual agreements," (with Renou's assent, cf. EVP IX: 8), which may be correct, but which assumes that Mitra means "Contract" or the like.

²⁴Cf. also I 136.3; V 72.2; VIII 102.12.

²⁵Similar also is VIII 36.3d jānam ca mitró yatati bruvāṇāḥ. The simplex of brū is very rare in the middle, but the possibility exists that it, unlike the compounded middles of brū, is used passively, cf. VI 38.2ab. See also Thieme 1957a: 39ff. For this passage, we also have a close Avestan parallel. Thus, Yt X 30 yaś.θwā aoxtō.nāmana yasna, raθwya vaca yazaitē "Who worships you (Mithra) with a prayer in which your name is spoken [=invoked], with a speech which is in accordance with the proper occasions ..." Cf. also 31 and 51 of the same Yašt.

²⁶Cf. Yt X 78a-c tūm tā daiñhāvo nipāhi, yā hubaraitīm yātayeiti, miθrahe vouru.gaoyaotōiš. Thieme (1957a: 40) translates, "Thou observest those countries, as to which one has good keeping of its contract arranged." Gershevitch (1959a: 327f.) protests that in the RV the subject of yātaya is a divinity, the object "people" or a word meaning "debt;" whereas in the Avesta, the subject is "people," the object barəsman-twigs or hubaraiti (in this one passage). He therefore translates yātaya after Bthlm. as "strive." Actually, there is no problem in substituting people for divinities: either one could "arrange." And if debts can be (co

these passages is the appellative sense of mitrá completely absent, for use of mitrá with yāt also occurs when mitrá is not employed as the name of a god. If we assume that mitrá means "contract," we can translate AV II 6.4b mitrénāgne mitradhā yatasva "Making a mitrá (contract) with us, Agni, take your position [= stand] according to (that) mitrá (contract)"²⁷ and RV IX 97.30bc rājā ná mitráṁ prá mināti dhīraḥ, pitúr ná putráḥ krátubhir yātānāḥ "Like a king, the wise (Soma) violates not his mitrá (contract, treaty), taking his position (according to it), like a son according to the intentions of his father." The translation "contract" for mitrá fits these passages because the meaning required by mitrá is that of a concept which regulates relations and actions between the two parties. This specific meaning, "contract," is not certain from the

"arranged" in the sense of "accounted for," so could the maintenance of the obligations of a contract be "accounted for." Benveniste (1964: 23) argues that hubərəiti is a technical term of the cult like hubərato etc. and that yātaya here, as elsewhere, is used in the sense of "arrange according to proper ritual prescription." He therefore translates: "Tu protèges ces pays, pour autant qu'ils mettent en place (rituelle) le bon traitement de Mithra." But simply because yātaya is used in ritual contexts elsewhere is no guarantee that it is so used here. The comparison with the Indic use of Mitra with yātaya in non-ritual contexts argues decisively, I believe, for such non-ritualistic use here.

But Thieme's translation, although preferable to those of Gershevitch and Benveniste, can and should be amended in two respects. First, nī pā in Avestan is really no different from nī pā in the RV. That is to say, it does not mean "observe," but rather "protect." Secondly, the relative yā could be taken not as nom. sgl., but rather as instru. sgl. Thus we may translate the lines as "You protect those countries with which (country) one arranges [= there is arranged] good support of a treaty which brings peace [lit. "broad pasturage"]." The idea is that Mithra protects and prospers those countries which abide by the treaties they have made with other countries.

²⁷Cf. Thieme 1957a: 40 n.27.

evidence thus far presented, but mitrá must be at least some similar principle through which relationships among people are established and maintained.

mitrá

What is, then, the principle which Mitra defends and governs? What is the meaning of mitrá? From the evidence afforded by the Avesta and the R̥gveda, I believe that Meillet's thesis, as elaborated by Thieme, is substantially correct. Indo-Iranian *mitra refers to a mutually binding relationship, and this is the primary sense from which the other meanings of the word in the old Iranian and Indic texts are derived. I find the usual formulation for this concept, "contract," however, overly narrow and inappropriately legalistic. I propose, therefore, to translate mitrá n. (and miθra m.) as "alliance."²⁸ In English, "alliance" can mean either a pact or a treaty which creates a reciprocal relationship or, more abstractly and generally, a relationship defined by mutual obligations. This semantic range accurately reflects that of Vedic mitrá. In addition, mitrá can also signify the condition which results from the institution of an alliance, the "peace" which an alliance or agreement brings.²⁹

²⁸So also, though on somewhat different grounds, Schmidt 1978: 385.

²⁹Such a range of meaning is common among similarly formed nouns ending in IIr. *-tra. The term kṣatrā (xšaθra), for example, can mean "dominion" in the abstract sense of the authority to rule or in the concrete sense of the political unit over which one authority governs, or it can even mean the "government" itself, the totality of those in power. Similarly, vṛtrā (vərəθra) can mean either "opposition" or a specific "obstacle." The relation between "alliance" and the state of (contd.)

Alongside mitrá n. is mitrá m., which is either Mitra, the god of alliances, or a term for a person connected with an alliance. The god is the power who governs alliances, who ensures their sanctity and inviolability or, less commonly, who effects an alliance. The person is one who is part of an alliance, an "ally." Sometimes, however, mitrá in this latter sense has a more specialized significance. A mitrá is not only an ally, but particularly that person who serves as the representative of one side of an alliance to the other. He is thus both part of an alliance and the "mediator" of the alliance, who either arranges the alliance or who is directly responsible for fulfilling its terms.

Before substantiating these proposals, let me note two implications of this view. First, this interpretation of mitrá precludes translating it by "friend" or "friendship." There is no doubt that an "ally" could also be a "friend," an "alliance" become a "friendship," but the words "friend" and "friendship" emphasize affection or love between two people. The term mitrá in the RV--as well as Avestan miθra--characterize a relationship which is not primarily affective but is rather defined by mutual obligation. Second, this interpretation resolves a problem raised by a passage in the hymn to Mithra. In Yt X 116-117, the text describes the degrees of sanctity which different miθra-s possess:

"peace" is analogous to that between Iranian darəθra which means a "holding fast" (das Festhalten) and its Indian cognate, dharmā "stability" (die Festigkeit), the condition which results from a "holding fast." Cf. Altind. Gr. II, 2 §517bd, p. 704.

Yt. X 116 vīsaitivā asti miθrō
 antarə haša suptiśarənga
 θrisaθwā antarə varəzāna
 caθwarəsaθwa antarə haθō.gaēθa
 panca.saθwa antarə huyāna
 xšvaštivā antarə hāvišta
 haptaiθivā antaṛa aēθrya aēθra.paiti
 astaiθivā antarə zāmātara x^vasura
 navaitivā antarə brāθra

 Yt. X 117 satāyuš antarə pitara puθramca
 hazaprāiš antarə dahyu
 baēvarōiš asti miθrō
 yō daēnayā mazdayasnōiš

Gershevitch (1959a: 131, 133) translates miθra here, as he does throughout the Yašt, by "contract."

"Twentyfold is the contract between two friends shouldering (mutual) obligations, thirtyfold between two fellow-citizens, fortyfold between two partners, fiftyfold between husband and wife, sixtyfold between two fellow-students, seventyfold between disciple and teacher, eightyfold between son-in-law and father-in-law, ninetyfold between two brothers, hundredfold between father and son, thousandfold between two countries; ten-thousand-fold is the contract of the Mazdayasnian Religion...."

Lentz (1970), however, objected to Gershevitch's translation on several counts. First, if miθra here characterizes the relationship that exists between brothers or between fathers and sons, as Gershevitch's translation implies, then it describes an involuntary, natural relationship. Such a relationship is not easily reconciled with the sense of English "contract." Second, the miθra of the Mazdayasnian religion, if understood as the contract between the Religion and the faithful (so Gershevitch 1959a: 268), significantly

differs from the other miṭra-s mentioned in this passage, which are between two people.³⁰

Thieme (1975: 24ff.) also acknowledged the difficulty posed by this passage and the justice of Lentz's criticism, but according to him these verses were misunderstood by both Gershevitch and Lentz. The term miṭra does not describe the natural relationship between relatives, but an agreement over and above their familial responsibilities into which they may enter if they choose. The text means to say that a covenant between brothers is more sacred than one which two fellow students, for example, might conclude, but less than one which a father and son establish. This solution is ingenious but unconvincing. Gershevitch's interpretation of the passage is far more natural, for the whole point of the passage is to underscore the sanctity of the bond that unites different people.

Interpretation of miṭra as an "alliance" resolves the major difficulties presented by the passage. First, an "alliance," unlike a contract, can include involuntary relationships. The essential point is that these relationships be founded on mutual responsibilities, not that they be concluded voluntarily.³¹ Second, the "alliance of the Mazdayasnian religion" is most naturally the alliance which exists among adherents of

³⁰Cf. Lentz 1970: 248. Further on Lentz's objections and proposals, cf. Schmidt 1978: 352ff.

³¹Cf. also a passage, cited by Schmidt (1978: 383), from the Dēnkart (D 60 [172]. 12ff. M 13ff.) which describes a mihr between a wolf and its cubs. Schmidt rightly comments that this natural relationship can hardly be called a contract. It is the natural bond between an animal and its offspring.

There is no certain evidence that Indian mitrá can likewise include such involuntary, natural relationships. There are, however, two pieces of indirect evidence. First, cf. RV IX 97.30 divó ná sárgā asasṛgram áhnam, rájā ná mitráṁ prá mināti dhīrah, pitúr ná putráḥ krátubhir (contd.)

the Religion because they are members of the same religious community.

The meaning of mitrá can best be seen through the R̥gveda's descriptions of mitrá-s in the world of men, for this is the most straightforward use of the term. The references to mitrá-s among men are not many, but they do mention several different kinds of relationships. We are told, for example, of "alliances" or treaties of peace formed between former enemies. A clear reference to a peace treaty is X 132.5ab asmin sv ètác chákupūta éno, hité mitré nígatān hanti vīrān "This guilt (rests) on Śakapūta now: after the treaty is concluded, he kills the men who have gone down [= surrendered]." Here the mitrá is the peace treaty which Śakapūta wantonly violates. Evidently such violations of a treaty or alliance were a common occurrence, for in another hymn, the poet addresses Indra as the avenger against those who treat the divine laws with the same disregard with which human agreements were often treated: X 89.8bcd ... vṛjinā śṛṇāsi, prá yé mitrásya

yatāná, á pavasva viśé asyá ájītim "The downpours (of soma) have poured down like (those) of heaven (or) of the days [= light]. Like a king, the wise (Soma) violates not his mitrá, taking his position (according to it), like a son according to the intentions of his father. By purifying yourself, grant to this community here freedom from violent overthrow." The mitrá here is the alliance between two different groups, not between a king and his subjects, as Schmidt (1978: 373f.) understands it. The common use of mitrá with yat also makes Schmidt's attempt to separate lines b and c unlikely. Therefore, though the relationship of father to son is not directly called a mitrá, it is compared to a mitrá. The poet does not see an incompatibility between a natural relationship and one defined as a mitrá.

Similarly, according to ŚB V 2.1.18, Bṛhaspati, when he had been consecrated, and the Earth were in fear of one another. But then Bṛhaspati spoke the formula, "Homage to Mother Earth! Homage to Mother Earth!" (námo mātṛé pṛthivyái). "Thus," the text concludes, "by this he made an alliance with her (tād anáyaivaitán mitradhéyam akuruta), for a mother harms not her son, nor a son his mother." Here the alliance that is established is that of a mother and son. It is made not by reaching an agreement, but simply by revealing a relationship that existed all the time.

vāruṇasya dhāma, yūjaṃ nā jānā minānti mitrām "You crush the crooked deeds (of those) who violate the institutes of Mitra and Varuṇa like people (violate) a union (or) an alliance (with one another)."³² This same fear that an ally will not be faithful is reflected in a rather surprising prayer which occurs both in the RV and in the AV. A poet of the Vāmādevas prays in IV 55.5cd pāt pātir jānyād āmhaso no, mitrō mitrīyād utā na uruṣyet "May the lord protect us from distress from a foreigner and may Mitra free us from distress arising from an ally."³³ This would be a most remarkable statement if mitrā meant "friend." A friend is not very likely to betray his friend. But an ally, one with whom a person's relationship is guaranteed by formal agreement, might well turn against his ally if his interests lie in doing so. It is no doubt this very temptation to violate such obligations that contributed to the deification of Mitra to provide an emphatic sanction against just such betrayal.³⁴

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, mitrā can mean not only the peace treaty, but also the state of peace itself, whether or not there is specific mention of a pact through which that peace was effected. I find this meaning in II 11.14ab rāsi kṣāyaṃ rāsi mitrām

³² Cf. Thieme 1975: 37; Schmidt 1978: 369.

³³ Similar also are AV II 28.1d mitrā enaṃ mitrīyāt pātv āmhasaḥ "Let Mitra protect him from distress arising from an ally" and AV XIX 15.6a ābhayaṃ mitrād ābhayaṃ amitrāt "(Let the atmosphere make for us) fearlessness from an ally, fearlessness from an enemy."

³⁴ Cf. also III 55.21 (and its parallel, I 73.3), which describes a god, either Indra or Agni, as dwelling on earth "like a king whose alliance is established" (hitāmitro nā rājā). This is a king who does not betray his ally, but who keeps his country prosperous and at peace. Cf. Schmidt 1978: 373.

asmé, rāsi śārdha indra mārutaṃ naḥ "Give us a peaceful dwelling, Indra. Give us peace. Give us the power of the troop of Maruts (to protect that peace)." Likewise in VIII 12.12a Indra is again addressed as the sanir mitrāsya "winner of peace," the god who has the power to establish peace. Men long to establish a peaceful dwelling place where they can prosper and gain riches like those which the gods can bring: IV 33.10cd té rāyās poṣaṃ drāviṇāny asmé, dhattā ṛbhavaḥ kṣemayānto nā mitrām "Establish for us, Ṛbhus, the prospering of wealth and goods, like those living peacefully (establish) peace." In another hymn, a gambler asks the dice to stop making war on him and ruining his once happy home: X 34.14a mitrām kṛṇudhvaṃ khālu mṛlātā naḥ "Now then, make peace (with us). Have mercy upon us." Elsewhere the peace which an alliance brings is described as the gift of Mitra, the god of alliances himself: VII 82.5cd kṣémeṇa mitrō vāruṇaṃ duvasyāti, marúdbhir ugrāḥ śúbham anyā īyate "Mitra favors Varuṇa with peace; the other Indra, the fierce (one) races to glory with the Maruts." The contrast here is between Indra and the army of Maruts, who serve Varuṇa through war, and Mitra, who supports him by instituting or maintaining peace. Similarly in II 4.3 the gods establish Agni "like those seeking to live peacefully (establish) a mediator" (kṣeṣyānto nā mitrām).

A second human alliance to which the RV refers is marriage. In these passages, however, mitrā does not refer to the marriage contract itself, but to the agents intimately involved in its conclusion. The first of these is the matchmaker, through whom the marriage is arranged. In the RV, Agni, the fire before which the wedding takes place, assumes this role: V 3.2cd añjānti mitrām súdhitam nā góbhir, yád dámpatī sámanasā kṛṇóṣi "They anoint you, (Agni), with milk like a mediator who

is well-established [= properly confirmed] when you make husband and wife of one mind." Pouring milk into the fire during the wedding is not only an offering, but, according to the poet, also the ceremonial appointment of the fire as a go-between in the wedding. Through his consecration, the fire becomes properly confirmed in this role, and therefore unites the man and woman into a single household.

In another, rather complicated verse, Brhaspati assumes the role of divine matchmaker:

X 68.2 sám góbhīr āṅgirasó náksamāno
 bhāga ivéd aryamānam nināya
 jāne mitró ná dámpatī anakti
 brhaspate vājáyāśūnr ivājáu

The Āṅgiraśa (Brhaspati), reaching there, unites (the Āṅgiras-priests) with cows,³⁵ like Bhaga [god of fortune] (unites) Aryaman [god of customs] (with cows). Like a Mitra among a people, he ceremoniously unites³⁶ husband and wife. Inspire them to victory, Brhaspati, like swift (horses) in a contest.

Line c describes a marriage, which unites two different peoples. The term jané mitráh--or elsewhere jányah (IV 38.6) or jányo mítryah (II 6.7)--refers to a go-between, a member of one people chosen to conclude an alliance with another people.³⁷ Brhaspati, because he unites the cows and the Āṅgirasas,³⁸ is compared to a jané mitráh. The reference in

³⁵Or: Brhaspati "unites (husband and wife) with milk." Cf V 3.2cd.

³⁶The verb anakti can represent sám anakti, "join together through anointing." Cf. X 85.47, the last verse of the Rgvedic wedding hymn, lines ab: sám añjantu víśve devāh, sám āpo h́dayāni nau "Let all the gods, let the waters ceremoniously unite our hearts."

³⁷Cf. Renou 1958: 35; Schmidt 1978: 380.

³⁸Cf. Schmidt 1968: 219, who also suggests, as another possibility, that the line refers to a symbolic "marriage" between the priests and the sacrificer.

line b to the Ādityas Bhaga and Aryaman shows that this poet identifies this mitrá as the god Mitra. To a degree, however, this is an invention of the poet. The mitrá here is divine because Brhaspati is divine, and then, quite logically, that mitrá becomes the god Mitra. This is something of a departure from the normal Rgvedic view of Mitra as the god of alliances, who ensures their sanctity.³⁹

The Rgvedic poets also use the term mitrá for the person with whom the marriage is concluded, the spouse, as in X 27.12cd bhadrá vadhūr bhavati yát supésāh, svayām sá mitráṃ vanute jāne cit "She becomes a lucky woman when she is well-bedecked. She wins for herself a spouse even among (another) people."⁴⁰ Also, V 52.14ab ácha r̥ṣe mārutaṃ gaṇám, dānā mitráṃ ná yośāṇā "(Turn) hither, ṛṣi, the troop of Maruts with your gift, like a young girl a spouse (with her dowry)."

Thus, the Rgveda attests at least two kinds of alliances among men: those established by a peace treaty and marriage. Similar alliances are projected upon the world of the gods as well. The disputes that arise among the gods, for example, are settled by treaties. In I 170, Agastya has prepared a worship for the Maruts, but Indra appears before they arrive, asking that it be given to him alone. In the last verse (5), Agastya begs that when the Maruts finally do come, Indra will reach an accord with them to determine who will get what part of the worship:

I 170.5 tvám íśiṣe vasupate vásūnām
 tvám mitráṇām mitrapate dhéṣṭah
 índra tvám marúdbhiḥ sám vadasvā
 -dha práśāna rtuthā havīm̐si

³⁹For lines ab, cf. below pp. 179f.

⁴⁰Again, mitrá is described as jané because he comes from outside the people of the bride.

You are master of goods, o lord of goods. You (are master of) alliances, o lord of alliances, (since you are) the best concluder (of alliances).⁴¹ Indra, make an agreement with the Maruts; then eat the oblations at your proper turn.

So also, the god of alliances himself brings about an agreement between earth and the dawns in AV III 8.1ab ā yātu mitrá ṛtúbhiḥ kálpamānaḥ, saṃveśāyan pṛthivīm usríyābhiḥ "Let Mitra drive hither, making arrangements according to the proper times, bringing the earth into accord with the ruddy dawns."

In order to win his battles and to perform his great deeds, Indra, the divine warrior, forms alliances with various gods, just as human commanders seek alliances. Thus, the alliance of Viṣṇu and Indra is called a mitrá in VIII 52 (Vāl. 4).3cd yásmāi viṣṇus trīṇi padā vicakramá, úpa mitráśya dhārmabhiḥ "(Indra), for whom Viṣṇu strode out the three steps in accordance with the principles of their alliance...." And when Soma helps Indra, he too is described as Indra's ally: VI 44.7ab ávidad dákṣam mitró náviyān, papānó devébhyo vásyō acait "The younger ally (Soma) has discovered the skill (Indra needs). Drinking (it), (Indra) perceived the better thing for the gods."⁴² Indra and Agni are also allies according to I 21.3 tā mitráśya práśastaya, indrāgnī tā havāmahe, somapā sōmapītaye "These two--for the celebration of (their) alliance--shall we summon. Indra and Agni!--the two soma-drinkers for the drinking of soma." In this last verse, of course, Indra and Agni are allied not in war, but as recipients of gifts offered to both conjointly. As in the world of men, therefore, a mitrá brings peace and harmony among the gods.

⁴¹Cf. Kuiper 1973: 229.

⁴²Cf. also I 186.8, in which the troops of Maruts, who race together, are compared to mitrayújah, those "joining in alliance."

The most important alliances in the RV, however, are not those among the gods or among men, but those formed between gods and men. And of these, the foremost is the sacrificial compact. According to this alliance, the gods will prosper men in return for the praises and offerings through which the gods themselves become powerful and vital. For example, in X 100.4, the poet reminds the gods to adhere to that alliance and to help those who worship them: X 100.4abc índro asmé sumánā astu viśvāhā, rājā sōmaḥ suvitásyādhy etu naḥ, yáthā-yáthā mitrádhitāni saṃdadhūḥ "Let Indra always be well-disposed toward us, and let king Soma look out for our comfort, according to the terms of the alliance they agreed to." This alliance is mediated by Agni, who represents the gods among men. As one poet describes him: VII 9.1cd dádhāti ketúm ubháyasya jantór, havyā devéṣu dráviṇam sukṛtsu "(Agni) holds the banner for both races, (bringing) oblations to the gods (and) wealth to those well-acting (worshippers)."⁴³

Agni's role in this exchange explains the frequent references to him as acting "like a mitrá" or, less often, as a mitrá. In these passages, mitrá refers to the "mediator," who establishes or fulfills the terms of an alliance,⁴⁴ which is normally the sacrificial compact.⁴⁵ A complete survey of these passages requires a separate study. Instead, I shall

⁴³Cf. Insler 1968b: 5 n.7.

⁴⁴In such contexts, Geldner often and correctly translates mitrá as "Mittler." In his treatment of these passages, Gonda (1972: 45ff.) tries to show that the comparison or identification of Agni and mitrá/Mitra is based on the "Mitraic features" such as benevolence, friendliness, etc., which Agni is supposed to show. Kuiper (1973: 230) and Schmidt (1978: 372, 378f.), however, have correctly reasserted Agni's role as mediator.

⁴⁵Exceptions are V 3.2 and X 68.2 (see above), in which Agni is compared to the mediator or go-between of a marriage contract.

examine selected verses in which Agni's role as mediator is well defined. For example, in II 6.7, Agni is compared to a mediator because he is a messenger:

II 6.7 antár hy āgna īyase
 vidvāñ jānmobhāyā kave
 dūtó jānyeva mītryah

For you, Agni, since you know how, hasten between both races, o sage, as a messenger, like a mediating (representative) from a (foreign) people.

The common element which motivates the simile is the image of Agni as intermediary. Because he moves back and forth between gods and men, Agni acts like an emissary from a foreign land, who unites two alien peoples. There are two ways in which Agni can fulfill his role as intermediary. He may either bring the gods to the worship (III 5.9) or the offerings of men to the gods (I 143.7). In either case, the sacrifice is the essential instrument through which the alliance of gods and men is realized.

How Agni becomes the mediator is variously described. According to AV II 6.4, as the mediator of the sacrificial alliance, Agni not only sustains it but institutes it:

AV II 6.4 kṣetrēṇāgne svēna sām rabhasva
 mitrēṇāgne mitradhā yatasva
 sajātānām madhyeṣṭhā
 rājñām agne vihávyo dīdihīhā

Take hold of your proper domain, Agni. Establishing an alliance, Agni, arrange yourself according to (that) alliance. Standing in the middle of your kin [= the gods], shine (also) here on earth, you who deserve to be summoned (even) by kings.

This passage explains the much discussed⁴⁶ Rgvedic verse, RV X 8.4cd

⁴⁶ Cf. Gonda 1973: 83f.; Thieme 1959: 47; Renou EVP XIV: 7.

ṛtāya saptā dadhiṣe padāni, janāyan mitrām tanvè svāyai "For the sake of truth, you have performed the seven steps, (thus) begetting an alliance for yourself." The seven steps are the ritual conclusion of an agreement or contract.⁴⁷ The compact referred to here must be the sacrificial alliance, and the truth which is established is therefore the mutual dependence of gods and men expressed in that alliance. Elsewhere in the same hymn, the altar is called the "lap of truth" (ṛtāsya yónih, vs. 3) and Agni the "protector of truth" (ṛtāsya gopā, vs. 5) because it is in the sacrifice that this truth is preserved.⁴⁸

In another passage, Agni is not the institutor of his own position in the alliance, but rather has been installed as the mediator by the Bṛghus, a group of mythical priests:

I 58.6 dadhús tvā bhṛgavo mānuṣeṣv ā
 rayīm ná cāruṃ suhāvaṃ jānebhyah
 hótāram agne ātithim váreṇyam
 mitrām ná sévaṃ divyāya jānmane

The Bṛghus established you among the sons of Manu as a fond treasure of easy summons for the peoples, as both priest and worthy guest (of men), o Agni, like a mediator (who is) beneficial to the heavenly folk (as well).

So too is VI 15.2a mitrām ná yām súdhitam bhṛgavo dadhuh "(Agni) whom the Bṛghus have established like a mediator, as one well-established" As I 58.6 makes plain, Agni has been installed as the god accessible to the "sons of Manu," that is, to the men who sacrifice.

He will be their divine guest and their priest, who carries their

⁴⁷ See Lüders 1951-59 I: 38.

⁴⁸ Cf. VI 13.2 and I 143.7.

worship to the gods. So also in VIII 19.8, Agni is compared to "the guest bringing alliance" (átithih ... mitriyah), for though a god, he has consented to dwell with men and make them allies of the gods. Like alliances among men, this alliance is established for the good of both parties. Thus, according to I 58.6d, Agni mediates the alliance not only for the good of men, but also for the benefit of the gods.

Often, therefore, it is neither Agni himself nor men who establish Agni as mediator, but the gods themselves, in their own self-interest. In II 4, for example, the installation of Agni, during which the hymn was recited, is explicitly patterned on the gods' first appointment of him as their representative to men. The first verse of the hymn announces the fire's installation:

II 4.1cd mitrá iva yó didhiṣāyō bhūd
 devá ādeve jáne jātavedāh

(Agni) who, like a mediator, has become one worthy to be established, the god (established) among the godly people, the Jātavedas.

The third verse then explains the divine action which has sanctioned this rite:

II 4.3ab agnīm devāso mānuṣīṣu vikṣú
 priyām dhuh kṣeṣyānto ná mitráṃ

The gods have established their own dear Agni among the communities of the sons of Manu, like those seeking to live peacefully (establish one of their own as) mediator.

The gods first established Agni among men as mediator for the explicit purpose of prospering their own lives. Therefore, by repeating this installation, men act exactly as the gods wish and have ordained.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Cf. VIII 31.14cd saparyāntaḥ purupriyām, mitráṃ ná kṣetrasādhāsam "... (while we are) serving (Agni) who, like a mediator, is very much our own dear (one) and who brings success to our domain." Here Agni is said to belong to men and to prosper their communities. Again, the mediator serves both sides of the alliance.

In addition to the sacrificial alliance with the gods in general, special alliances may also be concluded with individual gods. The poets seek especially Indra as their ally, for he can become a terrible enemy or a powerful friend. He can plunge men into war or preserve their peace.⁵⁰ Thus, the Paṇis, when confronted with Saramā's demand to release their treasures to Indra, try to reach a compromise which will avoid Indra's onslaught: X 108.3cd ā ca gáchān mitráṃ enā dadhāmā, -thā gávām gópatir no bhavāti "If he will come, we shall make an alliance with him, so that he will become the cowherd of our cows."

If a person succeeds in concluding a treaty with Indra, then the god becomes like a human ally who stands ready to help in accordance with their alliance; e.g. X 29.4c mitró ná satyá urugāya bhṛtyái "(Are you not coming to us) like a true ally, o you who goes widely, for (our) support [= to support us]?" and I 129.10bc ugrām cit tvā mahimā sakṣad āvase, mahé mitráṃ návase "Greatness shall accompany you, the mighty (one), for help (to us), (you who are) like an ally for great help." In VIII 96.6, the priest calls on the warrior Indra to join his people as an ally in war: índreṇa mitráṃ didhiṣema gīrbhír, úpo námobhir vṛṣabhām viṣema "We would like to conclude an alliance with Indra through (these) hymns, and we would draw near the bull through (our) homages." So also the poet asks in X 22.1ab kúha śrutá índraḥ kásminn adyá, jáne mitró ná śrūyate "Where is famous Indra? Like an ally among what people is he today renowned?" and he then answers his own questions

⁵⁰ Cf. III 46.2cd éko víśvasya bhúvanasya rájā, sá yodháyā ca kṣayáyā ca jánān "Being the single king of the whole creation, (Indra) brings war and peace to the peoples."

in the following verse: X 22.2 ihá śrutá índro asmé adyá, stáve ...,
mitró ná yó jáneṣv ā,yáśas cakre ásāmy ā "Here is Indra renowned!
 Among us today is he praised! -- (he) who, like an ally among a people
 (to whom he is allied), has set his complete glory here." The celebration
 of Indra in the worship induces the god to be present among the poet's
 tribe and to stand as their ally.⁵¹

In summoning Indra as a mitrá, the poets call on him to oppose those
 whom they consider as amitra-s "enemies."⁵² In I 63.5, for example,
 Indra is asked to "ram the amitra-s through" (śnathiḥy amitrān); in
 VI 44.17, to "smash the rivals and amitra-s (jahí ... śátrūn ...
amitrān). He is renowned as the amitrāhán, the "smasher of enemies"
 (VI 45.14; X 22.8, 134.3). Or again, he is, according to X 152.1bcd,
amitrakhādó ádbhutaḥ, ná yásya hanyáte sákhā, ná jīyate kádā caná "a
 wonderful destroyer of enemies, whose comrade is not slain nor ever
 overcome."⁵³

⁵¹ Cf. also X 147.5 and AV XIX 15.6 In X 22.1f., as well as VIII
 96.6, Schmidt (1978: 374f.) sees Indra not simply as a war-ally, but as
 the king. The alliance is that between a sovereign and his subjects. He
 may be correct, but the content of the verse itself does not require this
 interpretation. Nor is it by any means certain that Rgvedic kingship was
 viewed as contractual (though cf. Schmidt 1978: 364f.).

⁵² Thieme (1975: 36) rightly identifies amitra as a bahuvrīhi, but
 his interpretation of the word as "without contract," that is, "who do
 not recognize the sacredness of contracts" (Thieme 1957: 62) is not
 necessary. The word can also be understood as "having no alliance" in the
 sense of "having no alliance with us" and therefore at war with us. Those
 called amitra can be "contract-breakers" or "traitors" of some sort--as
 they surely are in X 89.9 for example--but they might also be "enemies"
 more generally. In VII 18.9, for example, the armies of the ten kings
 whom Sudās, with the help of Indra, routed, are called amitra, though there
 is no indication that they broke a treaty or alliance. Rather, they are
 simply those with whom Sudās is at war, with whom no peace has been made.
 Or again, in X 22.8, as the scourge of the dasyus, Indra is called amitrāhán,
 not because the dasyus break their alliances, but because they have no
 alliance with the poet's tribe.

⁵³ This verse also provides an explanation for another in which Indra
 appears to destroy those who are "allied" (mitrín). This verse is (contd.)

Indra is not the only god who acts like an ally to men. One poet, for
 example, calls on Viṣṇu to be gracious toward him the way an ally would be:
 I 156.1a bhāvā mitró ná sévyo ghṛtāsutiḥ "Become kindly like an ally, o
 you to whom is given the drink of ghee." Another describes Bṛhaspati as
 I 190.6b ḍurniyántuḥ páripriṭo ná mitráḥ "difficult to stop like an ally
 who is universally dear." In this last verse, the poet means that
 Bṛhaspati, like the perfect ally whom any people would desire and cherish,
 is willing and able to come to the aid of his ally no matter what might
 stand in the way.

As we have seen, the hymns of the RV concentrate on entreating the gods
 to help in accordance with their alliances with men. Occasionally, however,
 the poets mention the reciprocal responsibilities which any alliance
 entails. In I 151.2, for example, the poet compares those worshipping
 Mitra and Varuṇa to allies of these gods and calls on the gods to fulfill
 their part of the alliance by offering support: I 151.2abc yád dha tyád

I 178.4ab evá nṛbhir índraḥ suśravasyā, prakhādāḥ pṛkṣó abhí mitríṇo bhūt,
 which Geldner (RVÜ I, 256f.) translates: "Also übertrifft Indra mit seinen
 Mannen in Drang nach Ruhm als starker (Feinde) vertilger alle, die Freund-
 schaft halten." But a mitrá or mitrín in the RV is never an ally of an
 enemy, for the enemy is the amitra, the one who is not part of the alliance.

The problem can be solved by a simple textual correction: for abhí
mitríṇo read abhímitríṇo. The phrase prakhādāḥ ... abhímitríṇaḥ then
 parallels the compound amitrakhādā in X 152.1, and the lines translate:
 "Thus, Indra, with his men, in pursuit of fame, has become a powerful des-
 troyer of the one allied against (him)." Similarly, the text of VII 18.10ab
 which reads īyúr gávo ná yávasād āgopā, yathākṛtām abhí mitráṁ citāsah
 should be corrected to abhímitram and translated: "(The Pṛśnigus) go,
 like cows which lack a cowherd from their pasture, gathered in every which
 way, toward the one allied against them." The lines describe the chaos among
 the Pṛśnigus in their defeat and flight. No other reading of this verse
 gives very good sense. Gonda (1973: 87), following Geldner RVÜ II: 196,
 understands the verse to mean that cattle without a herdsman form a spon-
 taneous mitrá, an arrangement of "order and authority." Such an interpre-
 tation runs directly counter to the scene of flight and disorder which the
 poet intends to depict.

These emendations are further supported by yAv. avi.miṭray (cf. Yt X 20),
 which is parallel in form and meaning to abhímitrín.

vām purumīḥāsya somīnaḥ, prā mitráso ná dadhiré svābhúvaḥ, ádha krátum
vidatam gātum árcate "If indeed the good helpers of the soma-bearing
 Purumīḥa, like allies, have installed you two (in the worship), then find
 the will and the way for him who praises (you)." Similarly, another poet
 exhorts the cows to give milk as an offering to the Áśvins in order to
 win an alliance with them which will prosper the poet and his people:
 I 120.9 duhīyān mitrádhitaye yuvāku, rāyé ca no mīmītām vājavatyai, iṣé
ca no mīmītām dhenumátyai "(The cows) should give milk for creating an
 alliance with you two. Destine us for the wealth produced by prizes.
 Destine us for the nourishment produced by milk cows." The exchange is
 balanced: for the cows' milk offered at the worship which gives the Áśvins
 strength, the gods will give the strength which comes through victory and
 from possessing more cattle.⁵⁴

Although the reciprocity of an alliance is implied in the above passages,
 it is primarily the responsibility of the gods to help men which is emphasized.
 There is, however, at least one example of a god pleading with a man for help
 in accordance with an alliance. This is V 40.7, in which the sun calls upon
 Atri to rescue him from the evil Svarbhānu:

V 40.7 nā mām imām táva sántam atra
 irasyā drugdhó bhiyāsā ní gārīt
 tvám mitró asi satyárādhās
 táu mehāvatam váruṇas ca rájā

Let him who is deceived by his envy and his fear not swallow me, who belongs
 to you, Atri. You are an ally whose care is true. (Therefore), do you two
 --you and king Varuṇa--help me now.

⁵⁴Cf. also III 58.4, in which the poet calls himself and his people
 "allies" (mitrásah) of the Áśvins and calls on them to help.

because Atri is an ally "whose care is true," who will respond to his ally
 when he is in need, the sun can depend upon him to save him.

Summary

With this survey of mitrá in the RV, I have now assembled the elements
 of my argument. If the name of the god indicates his fundamental nature,
 there are two competing explanations of Mitra. The first, that of Bergaigne
 and Gonda, sees Mitra as a "friendly" god or as the embodiment of "friend-
 ship." The other, proposed by Meillet and defended especially by Thieme,
 understands him as the god of contracts or simply as god Contract. Study of
 the god's functions in the RV raises serious problems for the first hypo-
 thesis. Mitra is neither "without wrath" nor "without vengeance" as that
 theory would predict. That Iranian Mithra also shares these characteristics
 shows that these are not adventitious descriptions of the god, but anciently
 established traits. In the RV, Mitra appears not so much as a friend, but
 as a king, who rules over the actions of men and who sets them in order.
 This character of the god is far more in accord with Meillet's view, for a
 god Contract would watch over men's adherence to their agreements and
 would be responsible for maintaining their proper relationships to one
 another. Ultimately, however, an interpretation of Mitra must rest on a
 consideration of the appellative mitrá.

I proposed that mitrá n. means "alliance," that is, a pact between two
 individuals or groups or any relationship characterized by mutual obligations.
 It can also designate that state which is created by an agreement, the state
 of peace between the parties to that agreement. This interpretation is
 similar to Meillet's, but the translation "alliance" suggests that mitrá

has a somewhat broader meaning than the translation "contract" implies, and it emphasizes the relationship between people more than the agreement which (usually) brings about that relationship.

Also in the RV, there is a mitrá m. which means the god "Mitra" or "ally"--one with whom an alliance is formed--or "mediator"--one who, as part of an alliance, acts to realize that alliance. The RV mentions two sorts of alliances among men: peace treaties and marriages. The gods too have their alliances, which either resolve disputes among them or which allow them to join together in a common enterprise. For the poets of the RV, however, the important alliances are those between gods and men. Of these alliances, the foremost is the sacrificial alliance. According to it, if men offer support and worship to the gods, the latter are obliged to provide men with life and prosperity. Agni, the fire of the sacrifice, is the agent through whom this exchange is effected, and therefore he is compared to a mitrá, a "mediator." He is both a part of the alliance and the representative of the divine community to the human community. In addition, the priests call on individual gods to be their allies. Especially Indra is a valued ally because he is so dangerous as an enemy, but as a comrade in arms, he can bring victory and wealth.

If mitrá n. means "alliance" and mitrá m. "ally, mediator," who then is the god Mitra? The occasional ambiguity between mitrá m. "ally, mediator" and mitrá m. "Mitra" suggests that the god might be a "divine ally" or a "divine mediator." But such an interpretation of Mitra would be open to the same sort of objections posed against seeing him as a "friend" or a "friendly divinity." He is neither a friend nor is he an ally, but an angry avenger if he need be and a king upon whom the organization of both the human and divine worlds depends. These characteristics

of the god portray him as a protector of alliances, not one with whom an alliance is formed. His central role is to give an alliance divine sanction, and by doing so, to make that alliance effective.

Mitra in the Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas

The R̥gveda thus portrays Mitr̥a as the god of alliances. Gonda arrived at a different conclusion, not only because he approached the material quite differently (cf. Schmidt 1978: 354ff.), but also because his discussion was based on the evidence of both the R̥gveda and the later Veda. For him, we ought not to speak simply of the Mitra of the R̥gveda, but rather of Vedic Mitra, for the conception of the god is essentially the same throughout the Vedic corpus. Gonda is surely correct in obliging us to study the young Vedic texts, for the RV can not be isolated from the rest of the Indian tradition. On the other hand, it is too much to assume that the conception of Mitra did not change during the Vedic period. The evidence of the later Veda must be considered separately in order to see whether the Mitra of these later texts is that of the RV or not, and, if not, the nature of his development.

The starting point for the consideration of Mitra in the later Veda is again the word mitrá. In the Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas, mitrá m. no longer designates anything but the god Mitra. Instead, mitrá n. comes to designate both a relationship and the person involved in that relationship.⁵⁵ The translations "alliance" and "ally" are still correct for young Vedic mitrá n. Certainly, as much of the evidence gathered by Gonda (1973) suggests,

⁵⁵For an explanation of this development, see Thieme 1975: 22 n.2.

primary emphasis is given to the helpfulness and kindness of a person called mitrá, and we can undoubtedly see in this fact the basis for the later development of classical mitrá n. "friend." Nevertheless, there remain passages in which mitrá retains its ancient meanings.

In the RV, rivals bring their hostilities to an end through a mitrá, a peace treaty or compact of alliance. This same meaning of mitrá is set in a ritual context in MS IV 5.2 (65: 11ff.). According to this text, the waters in the cup of the Maitravaruṇa-priest and the nigrābhya-waters are rivals (bhrātṛvyāḥ). The adhvaryu unites these waters in the ritual, and therefore, "he makes an understanding for them; he gives to them an alliance" (saṃjñānam ābhyah karoti, mitráṃ ābhyo dadāti).⁵⁶ The parallelism of saṃjñāna and mitrá establishes the sense of mitrá. The waters no longer stand at odds with one another, but are rather united in intention and action. The mitrá is that union, that alliance, which is thus effected.

Similarly, according to ŚB III 3.4.24, RV X 37.1 (VS IV 35) is recited in order to appease the sacrificial animal, which might otherwise avenge its death on the sacrificer. By this recitation, the priest "does homage" (nāmaḥ ... karoti) to the beast and "makes for himself an alliance with it" (mitradhéyam evānenaitát kurute). Gonda (1973: 90) translates this last line as "establishes 'friendly' relations with it." But this translation obscures the point of the passage. By means of the verse, the priest mollifies the victim, and thus men gain the rewards of a successful sacrifice, while the victim gains the reverence of men. Hostilities are ended through this exchange, and a peace is effected to the satisfaction of both sides. This is not a friendship; this is an agreement, an alliance.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Or better, read dadhāti, "he establishes an alliance for them."

⁵⁷Cf. also ŚB III 8.5.11; XII 9.2.6 and Thieme 1975: 36 on these passages.

As in the RV, the person with whom one establishes an alliance or makes peace becomes one's ally. Thus, TS II 1.8.4 prescribes the sacrifice of a white animal to the god Mitra when the sacrificer wishes to make peace with another person:

TS II 1.8.4 maitráṃ śvetám ā labheta saṃgrāmé sámyatte samayákāmo;
mitráṃ evá svéna bhāgadhéyenópa dhāvati, sá eváínam
mitréṇa sām nayati

He who, when a battle is joined, (becomes) desirous of an agreement, should sacrifice a white (beast) belonging to Mitra. He thus supplicates Mitra with his own share, and so he [Mitra] brings him into agreement with his ally.

Again, mitrá is an ally, not a friend, because the relationship between the sacrificer and his former enemy is established through a peace treaty.⁵⁸

It is unclear to what extent such a peace treaty involved simply a cessation of hostilities or more positive obligations on the part of the two parties (cf. Schmidt 1978: 371). Other passages do describe allies who actively help one another. Such alliances are especially important to a ruler whose authority depends on the cooperation of powerful supporters. In the view of the yājñikas, one of the king's most important allies is the purohita, for he can exercise the special powers belonging to a brāhmaṇa, on which the prosperity of the king's rule depends. In the AB, for example, there is a hymn extolling the purohita and underlining his importance to the king. The hymn begins:

⁵⁸According to Schmidt 1978: 355, since "the person with whom the samaya is effected is called mitra, the passage denotes a settlement or conciliation with people with whom the mitra-relationship had already existed." I doubt that this is correct. Rather, I think the last clause looks ahead to the conclusion of the alliance and therefore refers to the other person as an ally. A real alternative to this interpretation is that mitrá refers to an ally the sacrificer obtains in order for him to win the battle in which he is engaged and not to his opponent. Cf. Bhāskara's commentary, which suggests these two possibilities.

AB VIII 27.2 tasya rājā mitram bhavati
dviśantam apabādhate
yasyaivaṃ vidvān brāhmaṇo
rāṣṭragopaḥ purohitaḥ

A king becomes the ally of him (and) repulses the hostile one, whose purohita, the guardian of his kingdom, (is) a brāhmaṇa who knows thus.

The hymn then continues by saying that such a king, having a skilled purohita, "by his power of dominion conquers a dominion" (kṣatreṇa kṣatram jayati) and that his people consent to what he wishes (tasmai viśaḥ saṃjānate).

Another ally is the jānyo mitrām, who in the later Veda is probably a man to whom one is allied by marriage (cf. Heesterman 1957: 118 n.24). During the unctio in the Rājasūya, this man uses a cup of nyagrodha-wood, for the nyagrodha-tree, with its many shoots growing into the ground, symbolizes an ideal dominion which is supported by many allies. Cf. MS IV 4.2 (52: 9ff.) mitreṇa vāi kṣatram vyāvatatam, avarodhāir nyagrodho, mitreṇa vā etāt kṣatram vyāwatanoti draḥimné 'śithiratvāya "A dominion is extended by an ally; the nyagrodha by its shoots. By an ally indeed does he extend his dominion for firmness and stability." Here Gonda's comment (1973: 92) is exactly right: "One consolidates one's position by an ally." The jānyo mitrām stands as the representative of all those to whom the king is formally related and upon whom he depends. These are not necessarily his friends: the jānyo mitrām is who he is not by reason of the king's affection for him or his for the king, but because of the formal tie of marriage.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The importance of such allies to the king is also expressed ritually in the Rājasūya. According to AB VIII 8.13, during the Punarabhiṣeka, after drinking the surā, the king offers it to him "whom he thinks well-disposed (rāti), for that is the symbol of their alliance (mitrasya rūpam)." "In that way," the text continues, "he finally creates for it support (pratiṣṭhāpayati) in an ally (mitre), for thus does one find support (pratiṣṭhati) in an ally."

Again, as also in the RV, allies are especially important in war. According to ŚB I 5.3.17, for example, when anyone offers prayājas, a kind of battle (sagrāmā) takes place and "whichever of the two opponents an ally (mitrā) joins, he gains the victory." In his discussion of this passage, Gonda (1973: 92f.) considers mitrā translatable by either "friend" or "ally," but "ally" is more appropriate in this context than "friend" because the idea of mutual responsibilities of the two mitrā-s in battle is implied.

These passages indicate that mitrā in the later Veda has retained the sense of "ally, alliance." What, then, of Mitra? In TS II 1.8.4 (above), the god is still closely linked with the appellative mitrā, for it is he to whom sacrifice is made in order to produce agreement between mitrā-s. Is he, therefore, the god of alliance, who ensures their sanctity, or is there any shift in the relationship between Mitra and the concept mitrā?

Unfortunately, the interpretation of Mitra in the later Veda is particularly difficult because he often appears alongside Varuṇa and is defined in opposition to Varuṇa.⁶⁰ Note first that this implies a distinct change from the R̥gvedic conception of these gods. In the RV, as we shall see, Mitra and Varuṇa are paired because they exercise complementary authority as kings, not because they are the opposites of each other. While the RV emphasizes their similarity, the YV and the Brāhmaṇas contrast them. Further, this relationship of opposition frequently determines the natures of one or both of the two gods. That is to say, Mitra and Varuṇa become the paradigm of pairs in opposition and can be made to represent almost any such pair. From the point of view of the individual characters of Mitra and Varuṇa,

⁶⁰ Much discussion has already been devoted to the pair Mitra-Varuṇa in the Veda. The most recent extensive studies are those of Gonda -- 1972: 18ff. and 1974: 145ff., but cf. also Dumézil 1940 and the further references to his work in Dumézil 1976: 29.

this process produces three types of oppositions: (1) those irrelevant to the interpretation of either Mitra or Varuṇa, (2) those which reflect the character of Varuṇa, but not of Mitra, and (3) those which produce images of both gods consistent with other evidence of their natures.

First, in many cases, the pairs associated with Mitra and Varuṇa have little or no bearing on any conception of either god. For example, Mitra and Varuṇa are the prāṇa and apāna (e.g. ŚB XII 9.2.12), the eye and the mind (e.g. KS XXVII 5 (144:6)), the two buttocks (TS V 7.15.1), the waning and waxing moon (ŚB II 4.4.18, cf. PB XXV 10.10), will and skill (krātūdākṣau, ŚB IV 1.4.1), etc.⁶¹ The conception of Mitra and Varuṇa as opposites is the basis of these identifications. Nothing of their individual characters is evident.

Other pairs associated with Mitra and Varuṇa may have some value for the interpretation of the latter god but not for the former. This is because Varuṇa remains the more important and powerful of the two, just as he is in the RV. A natural association of Varuṇa with one half of a pair may, therefore, lead to the identification of Mitra with the other half, even though he may have no intrinsic relationship to it. The best example is the identification in ŚB IV 1.4.1ff. of Varuṇa with kingship and Mitra with the priesthood (kṣatrā and brāhman). Already in the RV, Varuṇa possesses the authority of kingship, and the young Veda continues this association. Therefore, if Varuṇa represents kingship and if Mitra complements Varuṇa, then Mitra must be the brāhman, for it is the complement of kingship.⁶² But this identification of Mitra with the brāhman

⁶¹Cf. Lévi 1898: 152.

⁶²Cf. Gonda 1972: 29f.; 1974: 156f.

holds no value for the interpretation of the god.⁶³ The relationship of Mitra and Varuṇa is the determinative factor here. At most, we might conclude from this that the kingship of Mitra, which is also mentioned in the young Veda, is not as prominent a characteristic of Mitra as it is of Varuṇa.

This process, through which Mitra takes on characteristics because he forms a pair with Varuṇa, leads to associations which at first appear substantive, but which actually do not relate to any conception of the god's nature. Thus, for example, Gonda (1972: 62f.) notes that Mitra is often associated with satyā "real, true," and he considers this an important characteristic of the god. But a survey of the passages he cites shows that this association is formal and derivative. In the young Veda, Mitra is usually called the "overlord of truths" (ādhipatiḥ satyānām) or "the true" (satyā) in passages in which Varuṇa is called the "lord of dhárman" (dhármapati) (e.g. TS I 8.10.2; MS II 6.6 (67: 12); TB III 11.4.1). This suggests that the source of the connection between Mitra and satyā is the epithet satyādharmān "whose institutes are real," which describes Mitra and Varuṇa in RV V 63.1. This compound has been split: to Mitra is assigned the satyā, to Varuṇa, the dhárman. There are two reasons for this distribution. First, Mitra is the first member of the compound mitrāvāruṇa and therefore the first element of the compound epithet belongs to him. Second, Varuṇa is characteristically and frequently the "lord of dhárman" in the young Veda.

Even though it was not founded on a conception of the character of Mitra, nonetheless, this association did assume an independent status. In

⁶³Otherwise, Dumézil 1976: 28.

TS III 4.5, for example, Mitra, as overlord of truths, stands alongside Varuṇa, the overlord of the waters (ādhipatir apām). Here, another major function of the young Vedic Varuṇa has been substituted for his lordship over dhárman. But this development is not far advanced. Mitra's association with satyá remains a superficial one.

In the third category of pairs, however, consistent and meaningful patterns of identification do emerge. Most importantly, where Mitra and Varuṇa are equated to pairs in which one member is more auspicious or pleasing and the other inauspicious or dangerous, the former is consistently associated with Mitra, the latter with Varuṇa. Thus, whatever of the sacrifice is well-offered belongs to Mitra, but whatever is ill-offered is Varuṇa's (ŚB IV 5.1.6; TB I 6.5.5). Varuṇa is associated with the left side, the weak, inauspicious side; Mitra with the right (TB I 7.10.1). Or again, because the fire is painful to touch, its form is Varuṇic, but if, making peace with the fire (mitrakṛtya), men revere (upa ās) it, then the fire takes on a "peaceful," Mitric form (AB III 4.6). That is to say, the fire in its natural form is violent and dangerous, but if treated with care, it can be put to good use. ŚB II 3.2.10, 12 likewise compare two forms of the fire to Mitra and Varuṇa. If a person seeks to gain food by violence, then he should make an offering into the fire as it comes into blaze, for that form is Varuṇa, who seizes with violence. But if one seeks food without violence, then he should make an offering into the dying fire, for that fire is Mitra, who is harmless. Similarly, an aśvattha-branch which is broken off by itself can be made into a vessel for Mitra, but that hewn off is Varuṇa's (according to ŚB V 3.2.5), for Varuṇa is connected with violence and Mitra with non-violence (cf. also ŚB V 3.2.6, 3.3.8; KS VII 11 (72: 19f.)).

The most frequent opposition of this type is that between Mitra/light and Varuṇa/dark. Thus, TS II 1.7.3 maitrām vá áhar vāruṇí rātriḥ "To Mitra belongs the day; to Varuṇa, the night" (cf. TS II 1.7.4, 4.10.1; VI 4.8.3; KS XI 10 (157: 14); AB IV 10, etc.). This opposition is reflected in the ritual. TS II 1.9.2, for example, prescribes that a man who desires food offer a black cow to Varuṇa and a white one to Mitra (cf. TS V 6.11-12). It is quite true, as Gonda (1972: 38) points out, that darkness is not always associated with danger or ill, but where it is explicitly contrasted to light, an element of foreboding is generally present. In AV IX 3.18, for example, Mitra is asked to "free" (vy ùbj) in the morning what Varuṇa has "forced together" (sám ubj) at night. Here Mitra is not only associated with day, but also freedom, as opposed to the confinement which night and Varuṇa bring.

This opposition of Mitra/light and Varuṇa/dark emerges entirely within the young Veda. It was not recognized in the RV. The only possible exception might be RV I 115.5:

RV I 115.5 tán mitráśya vāruṇasyābhicákṣe
 sūryo rūpām kṛṇute dyór upásthe
 anantám anyád rúśad asya pájah
 kṛṣṇám anyád dharítaḥ sám bharanti

Renou (EVP XV: 6), who finds here the opposition between Mitra/light and Varuṇa/dark, translates: "Cette (double) forme, (l'une) de Mitra, (l'autre) de Varuṇa, le Soleil l'assume pour se rendre visible au giron du ciel;/ illimitée (est) l'une (de ses deux) forme(s-massives), (celle qui est) brillante [= Mitra]; l'autre [= Varuṇa], la noire, les alezanes la reploient" (cf. Geldner RVÜ I: 152; Gonda 1972: 5f.). First, even if we were to accept this translation of the verse, a single, isolated passage

is insufficient evidence to establish the Mitra/light vs. Varuṇa/dark opposition as an old and fundamental characteristic of these gods.⁶⁴ But this interpretation of I 115.5 is by no means the only and the obvious one. The most straight-forward translation is: "In the lap of heaven, Sūrya takes on the (visible) appearance of Mitra and Varuṇa (for it) to be seen. The one face of him (is) shining without limit. The other, the dark one, his horses roll (back) up." In the last two lines, the poet describes the movement of the sun from east to west during the day, when its bright side shows, and from west to east at night, when, because its dark side is turned toward men, it is invisible.⁶⁵ In the first two lines, however, Mitra and Varuṇa are said to be visible in the sun, undoubtedly because the sun serves these gods and helps them carry out their characteristic functions.⁶⁶ In vs. 1 of this hymn, for that matter, Sūrya is called the "eye of Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni" which surveys all things and is visible throughout the world. If, therefore, Sūrya appears as the visible symbol of Mitra and Varuṇa in vss. 1 and 5ab, the poet is hardly likely to equate his invisible side to Varuṇa. Renou quite wrongly identifies rūpá in line b and pājah in c; the rūpá is the outward appearance of an object. It is, as line a explicitly says, "to be seen."

If this pattern of Varuṇa/dark versus Mitra/light, or more generally, of Varuṇa/negative versus Mitra/positive, is a creation of the later Vedas, its basis must lie in the transformational process characteristic of these texts. The principal determinant was the conception of Mitra and Varuṇa

⁶⁴As, for example, Kuiper 1964/65: 115.

⁶⁵Cf. Sieg 1923: 4ff.

⁶⁶On the sun as an Āditya and in the service of the Ādityas, see below pp. 314-317.

as opposites. But Varuṇa's movement toward the negative and Mitra's toward the positive was conditioned by qualities intrinsic to each: the ominous potential of Varuṇa's character and the positive connotations of mitrá. This pattern was so frequent and consistent, however, that it produced a secondary reflection in the character of each god. It intensified the ominousness of Varuṇa and the benevolence of Mitra, not only when they were contrasted, but also when they appeared independently of one another. There occurred a dialectic between Mitra and Varuṇa as a positive/negative contrasting pair and Mitra and Varuṇa as individuals. The individual characteristics of the gods influenced the realization of the contrasting pair, and the pair amplified those characteristics which shaped it. The latter development will become clearer in the further study of Mitra and Varuṇa.

But while the young Veda often contrasts Mitra and Varuṇa, it does not always do so. The R̥gvedic conception of them as a pair with similar and complementary functions is not wholly abandoned. Thus both Mitra and Varuṇa are those "increasing the truth" (rtāvṛdh, cf. TS I 8.12.2g = MS II 6.9 (69: 3ff.) = KS XV 7 (213: 20ff.) as in RV I 2.8, 23.5; II 41.4, III 62.18. They are still associated with the dhárman, e.g. MS IV 9.1 (121: 10f.) váruṇas tvā dhṛtávrato dhūpayatu, mitráváruṇau dhruvéṇa dhármanā "Let Varuṇa, whose commandment is upheld, sprinkle you with incense; let Mitra and Varuṇa, in accordance with their enduring institute," cf. MS III 8.9 (108: 4); TS I 3.1.i; KS XXV 10 (118: 10) and RV V 63.7, 72.2; IX 107.15; X 65.5.⁶⁷ The passages in the later Veda which are verbally dependent on the RV--as those above are--leave doubt,

⁶⁷Further, cf. Gonda 1974: 188f. et passim.

however, whether such descriptions are merely based on the words of the RV or on a living concept of the gods as protectors of the truth and dhárman. That the dual dvandva mitrávaruṇa occasionally assumes a character independent of Mitra and Varuṇa (as in MS IV 9.1, above) indicates that Ṛgvedic formulae are occasionally transposed for ritual purposes without special attention to the conceptions which originally stood behind them.

So far, therefore, one consistent image of Mitra has emerged: the benevolent Mitra. He assumes this character partly because he contrasts to Varuṇa. But he does so also because the young Veda sees Mitra as the divine mitrá, the divine ally. This is a departure from the earlier conception of the god. The Ṛgvedic poets can play on the two sense of mitrá m. "ally" and "Mitra" and view Mitra as an ally (e.g. RV III 5). But for the most part, Mitra is not an ally; he is the lord of allies and their alliances. In the young Veda, he does become an ally and acts the way a perfect ally would be expected to act. He is always helpful, kind, beneficent.

In the Agniṣṭoma, for example, the sacrificer accepts the soma from the adhvaryu with the words, "Come hither to us like Mitra, well-concluding an alliance"⁶⁸ (mitró na éhi sūmitradhāḥ, TS I 2.7.f = KS II 6 (12:4)), on which TS VI 1.11.1 comments: vāruṇó vái krītāḥ sóma úpanaddho, mitró na éhi sūmitradhā ity āha, śāntyai "When soma is bought and bound, it belongs to Varuṇa. He says, 'Come hither to us like Mitra, well-concluding an alliance' for the sake of appeasing (it)." When first taken, soma is bound and brought by force. Since Varuṇa is the god who binds, soma

⁶⁸For the translation of this yajus, see Kuiper 1973: 231.

therefore belongs to Varuṇa. But the soma must serve willingly in the ritual, not by force, and therefore the sacrificer appeases it through making an alliance with it. He converts soma into a Mitra, a divine ally, who will freely help him.

Because Mitra is the divine ally, he becomes the perfect ahimsaka. Several Brāhmaṇic passages know him as the mitrá of everyone, as, for example, ŚB V 3.2.7:

ŚB V 3.2.7 ná vái mitráḥ kām caná hinasti, ná mitráḥ kás caná hinasti, nainaṁ kuśó ná káṇṭako ví bhinatti, nāsya vrāṇas canāsti, sárvasya hy évá mitró mitráṁ

Mitra truly does not harm anyone; nor does anyone harm Mitra. Neither kuśa-grass nor thorn cuts him. Nor has he any wound, for indeed, Mitra is the ally (mitrá) of everyone.⁶⁹

One of the basic intentions of an alliance is that the two parties will help, or at least not injure, one another. Because he is the divine ally, Mitra has this relation with every creature, even plants, and is therefore completely unthreatened and unthreatening. Note the difference between this Mitra and that of the RV. There, he can be angry and take vengeance against those who betray their alliances; here, such vengeance is impossible.

But Mitra is not only the divine ally in the young Veda. He is still the god of alliances, though in a sense somewhat different from that of Ṛgvedic Mitra. In the Yajurveda and Brāhmaṇas, he effects alliances between powers--normally ritual powers--in conflict, ends disputes, and brings harmony in place of discord. Further, his own character assumes the qualities of an alliance, and he becomes, therefore, the divine representation of peace and order. These conceptions of him thus maintain the image of the

⁶⁹Cf. TS VI 4.8.1; ŚB IV 1.4.8 and see also Gonda 1973: 85.

god as the beneficent helper, which is established through his opposition to Varuṇa and his role as the divine ally. The differences between this Mitra and the Ṛgvedic Mitra are not to be overlooked. In the RV, the dominant conception is that of a god who protects alliances and watches over the peace, but in the young Veda, he produces alliances and becomes the embodiment of peace. In the RV, he is a peace-keeper; in the young Veda, he is a peace-maker.

So, for example, he is frequently invoked to "appease" (śam) powers which have been disturbed or offended in the course of the ritual. According to KS XXXV 19 (65: 7ff.) = KapS XLVIII 17 (307: 19),⁷⁰ when rain falls on the Agnihotra-milk in the sacrificial spoon, the sacrificer becomes seriously endangered. To cure the defect, that milk should be offered to Mitra with the recitation of the first stanza of the Ṛgvedic hymn to Mitra, RV III 59. For, these texts explain, "Mitra truly is the appeasing of the sacrifice. Through Mitra, he appeases it." (mitró vái yajñásya śántir, mitréṇaiváinac chamayati). The disturbance within the sacrifice is thus corrected and its evil consequences avoided.⁷¹ In TB III 7.2.4, the same comment appears, except that kalpayati "put in order" substitutes for śamayati "appease." This suggests that the appeasement which Mitra effects consists of the formation of an alliance, for it is the function of an alliance to bring order in place of conflict. In this case, the alliance is between either the elements of the sacrifice which were disordered by the rain or, as Bodewitz (1973: 174) suggests, between the rain and the milk, which Mitra fuses into a unity.

⁷⁰Cf. also TB III 7.2.3.

⁷¹Cf. Hoens 1951: 40f.; Gonda 1973: 73; Bodewitz 1973: 173f.

The characteristic functions of Mitra--to order and appease--contrast to those of Varuṇa. In KS XXV 10 (118: 10ff.), the yājñika explains why the sacrificial stake is pounded in according to the dhárman of both Mitra and Varuṇa: "By Mitra, in truth, are these subjects appeased; by Varuṇa (are they) regulated. Thus (this is done) for ordering and regulation" (mitreṇa vā imāḥ prajāś śāntā, varuṇena vidhṛtāḥ klṛtyā eva vidhṛtyai).⁷² Varuṇa, he is saying, brings harmony among peoples by imposing authority, but Mitra does the same through bringing the cessation of hostility between people and so setting them in harmony.⁷³ In one respect, this relationship of Varuṇa and Mitra comes close to their relationship in the RV, for here they represent two complementary ways of organizing human society.

The difference between the functions of Mitra and Varuṇa is even more dramatically underscored in KS VII 11 (72: 19f.) mitreṇa ca vā imāḥ prajāḥ guptāḥ krūreṇa ca, mitram mitraḥ krūraṁ varuṇaḥ "These subjects are protected by peace and by violence. Mitra is peace; Varuṇa, violence." According to this passage both Mitra and Varuṇa benefit man, but Varuṇa does so by threat and punishment, while Mitra not only brings peace, he is also identified with that peace. Hence all war-like attributes are by definition excluded from his character, cf. ŚB II 3.2.10, 12 and Gonda 1974: 195. Such a characterization of Mitra is impossible for the RV since there, as king and guardian of alliances, he must take vengeance against the infractors of an alliance.

As a bringer of peace, Mitra mollifies the anger of the gods. During

⁷²Cf. Hoens 1951: 87 and KS XXVII 4 (142: 9ff.).

⁷³This difference between the two is also reflected in TS I 8.10.2.f ab sārve vrātā varuṇasyābhuvan, ví mitrá évair árātim atārīt "They have all become obedient to Varuṇa. Mitra, through his activities, has overcome hostility." (Similar: MS II 6.12 (71: 8f.); KS XV 8 (215: 7f.)). Again, Varuṇa exacts obedience, while Mitra arranges peace.

the molding of a lump of clay mixed with a number of other substances, Mitra is invoked, for, according to KS XIX 6 (7: 3f.) = KapS XXX 4 (141: 23f.), varuṇamenir vā eṣa, mitreṇaiva varuṇamenim upaiti "this (lump) is, in truth, the vengeance of Varuṇa. Thus, by Mitra, he propitiates the vengeance of Varuṇa" (similarly MS III 1.6 (8: 12f.)). The parallel passage in the TS--TS V 1.6.1f. --names Agni as the offended and angry god whom Mitra pacifies: mitró vai śívó devānām, ténaivā enaṁ sāmsrjati, śāntyai "Mitra, in truth, is the kindly one among the gods. Thus, (the adhvaryu) mingles him (i.e. Agni) with him, for the appeasement (of Agni)." Here the rite is interpreted as a means of pacifying Agni who, when "bound belongs to Varuṇa" (vāruṇó vā agnir ūpanaddhaḥ).⁷⁴ Again, the contrast to Ṛgvedic Mitra, who can and does become angry (RV VII 62.4; X 12.5), or to Avestan Mithra, who is "notorious for his anger" (Yt X 47), is stark.⁷⁵

In summary, then, the analysis of Mitra in the YV and the Brāhmaṇas begins with the appellative mitrá. The meaning of mitrá is basically the same in these texts as it is in the RV: a mitrá is still an "alliance" or an "ally." As in the RV, hostilities are ended through a mitrá "alliance" and people who are formally bound to such a pact of mutual cooperation are called mitrá-s "allies." The king in particular was dependent upon such alliances to maintain his rule and the strength of his dominion. We hear, for example, of allies with whom a peace treaty is concluded and allies who will help him fight his wars. He has allies through marriage, and he should make an ally of a competent brāhmaṇa who can serve as his purohita.

⁷⁴Cf. Hoens 1951: 118f.

⁷⁵For other references to Mitra as the god who appeases, cf. Hoens 1951: 13, 55, 77, 103f., 166, 170.

The characteristics and functions of Mitra are determined partly by his name and partly by his relationship with Varuṇa. Mitra and Varuṇa form a pair, in which each complements and normally opposes the other. Hence they come to symbolize or become identified with a variety of pairs, especially pairs of opposites, viz., the inhalation and exhalation, the eye and the mind, the two buttocks, the waxing and waning moon, etc. Such identifications are based on the relationship between the two gods and have no value in determining the individual character of either one. Still other oppositions yield consistent and meaningful images of the two gods. According to these, Mitra normally represents what is peaceful or benevolent, Varuṇa, what is violent or dangerous.

This image of Mitra does not evolve simply through his opposition to Varuṇa, but also rests on the ways in which Mitra is seen as an embodiment of mitrá. Mitra is the divine mitrá in two respects. First, Mitra is often a perfect "ally" of all beings. As such, he does no injury and poses no threat. Second, he is also the god of alliances in that he creates alliances and quells conflicts and in that he is the representation of peace and order. In both these aspects, he once again emerges as helpful and peaceful. The characteristics he acquires through his opposition to Varuṇa, therefore, do not contradict the nature defined by his name, but rather heighten those aspects of that nature which contrast most clearly to Varuṇa's characteristics.

This Mitra, therefore, differs considerably from that of the RV. First, in the RV, Mitra complements Varuṇa. They defend and represent two different principles according to which society is ordered. In the young Veda, however, this complementary relationship is transformed into one of opposition. Second, it is wholly foreign to the RV for Mitra and Varuṇa to become symbols of other pairs, as they do in the young Veda. In the RV, the relationship

between the two depends on their individual characters and does not assume an independent value.

Like the RV, the characteristics of Mitra remain closely associated with the term mitrá, but the relationship between Mitra and mitrá is much changed. For the most part, Rgvedic Mitra is the protector and guardian of alliances. He is neither the divine ally of all, who never shows anger or does injury, nor does he usually bring about alliances or institute peace, as in the later Veda.

Such differences by no means vitiate the importance of the later Veda for the interpretation of the RV. The continuities among these texts are substantial and important. Thus, the material provided by the later Veda helps confirm the analysis of the meaning of mitrá and the thesis that the nature of Mitra is expressed in his name. But they do constitute a warning about the way Vedic texts can be interpreted. First, they show that there may be substantial differences in the way the functions of the god relate to his name. In both the RV and the later Veda, Mitra is the divine mitrá in a number of senses. In the RV, one particular sense is emphasized; the later Veda stresses others. The differences in emphasis are by no means insignificant, for through them, Mitra acquires a very different image and set of characteristics. Second, study of Mitra also illustrates the differences between gods in the RV and in the later Veda. In the RV, the characteristics of the god relate to a central character, which defines the god and determines his relationship with other gods. Mitra is the god of alliances, the protector of alliances, and his functions in that text generally relate to that character. In the later Veda, the structure of ritual speculation determines various functions of the gods, and the central character of a god may be blurred or altered. In the case of Mitra, his role as the complementary opposite of Varuṇa produces identifications and associations which have very little to do with his character as the divine mitrá.

VARUṆA

More so than of Mitra, the interpretation of Varuṇa is a forbidding task. So many different hypotheses and approaches have been tried that one more attempt might seem to add more to confusion than to clarity. Nonetheless, I think progress can be made by applying stricter standards to competitive hypotheses than has been the rule in the past. In this way, we can at least sift potential wheat from certain chaff.

I propose that an acceptable interpretation of Varuṇa ought to meet the following four criteria. First, it ought to explain passages which are not otherwise easily explicable. Second, it ought to be as specific as possible in explaining his functions. Yet, third, it should account for his total character within Rgvedic religion. And last, it must be compatible with the interpretation of Mitra, with whom he is so closely associated.

Like those of Mitra, the theories of Varuṇa fall into two categories. They either explain Varuṇa as a god of nature or as a god of some principle or concept, which is expressed in his name. Often believing that Rgvedic gods were generally nature gods, early Vedic scholars followed the first alternative. However, they never reached a consensus on just which natural entity Varuṇa was supposed to represent. The field was dominated by three interpretations: Varuṇa as god of the sky, as god of the moon, and as god of the waters.

The theory that Varuṇa was god of the sky is the most venerable of the three.¹ It rested on two mistaken beliefs. The first is that Mitra was a

¹Cf. Roth 1852: 71f.; Darmesteter 1877: 67ff.; Bohnenberger 1893: 26ff.; Macdonell 1897: 27; Bloomfield 1908: 137; von Schroeder 1914: 322f. For others see Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 1 n.1.

sun-god and that Varuṇa must therefore be a complementary natural form. The second is the equation of Skt. vāruṇa and Gk. ouranós "sky, heaven." Although this etymology was revived in more recent times,² it had already been shown to be untenable by Wackernagel.³

A second theory, espoused most notably by Hardy, Oldenberg, and Hillebrandt,⁴ held that Varuṇa was the moon. The basis of Oldenberg's view was his idiosyncratic theory of the Ādityas as gods of the planets, Varuṇa's associations with darkness in the later Veda, and the identification of Mitra with the sun. Hillebrandt founded his view on the solar origins of Mitra and on the few Rgvedic passages which identify Varuṇa with Soma. According to Hillebrandt, Soma represents the moon, and so if Soma is Varuṇa, then Varuṇa must also be the moon. But this identification of Soma and the moon has no basis in the RV itself, as Lüders (1951-59 II: 698ff.), following Oldenberg (1917: 175ff.), has shown.

Pischel,⁵ in his critique of Oldenberg, maintained that Varuṇa was the god of the sea and the water in the RV, just as he was in classical India. There is indeed a close relationship between Varuṇa and the waters, but, as I will show later, this relationship derives from, and is not constituent of, the central character of the god.^{6,7}

²Dumézil 1934, especially 49f. and 1938: 53.

³Wackernagel 1916: 296f., cf. also Thieme 1957a: 60. Whether ouranós has an Indo-European etymology at all is questionable.

⁴Hardy 1893: 38ff.; Oldenberg 1896: 62ff.; 1917: 178ff.; Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 2ff., 41ff. Hillebrandt had earlier believed that Varuṇa was the sky.

⁵Pischel 1895: 448f.

⁶For a more thorough review of the early theories of Varuṇa, see Dandekar 1940: 161ff.

⁷Two other theories saw Varuṇa as an alien import into Vedic religion. According to Kretschmer (1926: 1ff.), the basis of Varuṇa is Hittite arunas (contd.)

Spurred by Meillet's thesis that Mitra is a personification of "contract" and convinced of the failure of any theory which held that Varuṇa was originally a god of nature, other scholars sought the basis for Varuṇa in an abstract concept. These attempts usually began with an etymology of the name vāruṇa, and in so doing, ran into immediate difficulty. Unfortunately, there are several roots from which vāruṇa could derive and several possible meanings which a noun in *-uno- derived from a particular root might have.⁸

The first systematic attempt to treat Varuṇa entirely separate from any supposed naturalistic basis was made by Güntert (1923: 147ff.). He endorsed an analysis of vāruṇa first proposed by Petersson,⁹ which derived the word from a supposed Indo-European root *wer "binden, fesseln" attested

"sea," which was borrowed by the Vedic Indians. This theory was refuted by Benveniste (1930/32: 206f.). Przyluski (1931: 613ff.) maintained that Varuṇa is Austro-asiatic, but Keith (1933: 515ff.) rightly rejected this view.

⁸Actually, the earliest scholar to see Varuṇa as, in some sense, a personification of an abstract concept wrote before Meillet. This was Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 110ff.). According to him, vāruṇa derived from vr̥ "couvrir, envelopper," and meant "sky" because the sky confines or encloses everything. But vāruṇa is the "encloser" "confiner" in other senses as well. For example, Bergaigne (p. 114) endorsed Sāyaṇa's explanation that Varuṇa was the confiner who imprisons malefactors in his fetters. He also argued (p. 115) that Varuṇa is closely associated with Vṛtra -- indeed, is Vṛtra raised "à la dignité divine" -- because both are "confiners."

This attempt to derive vāruṇa from vr̥ "enclose" has lately been revived, though with a different interpretation of its meaning. In his Grammaire de la langue védique 208 n.2, Renou finds an appellative use of vāruṇa twice in the RV. Once, in X 89.9, it means "protection" and in I 186.3, "protector." In EVP IV: 36, however, he recants somewhat and says that it would be rash to suppose an appellative use of vāruṇa in I 186.3. Thieme (1941: 88 n.2) had earlier suggested the meaning "Schutzherr" for vāruṇa in I 186.3, but later, as we shall see, also changed his view.

Meid (1957: 82 n.25) also draws a connection between vāruṇa and varūtár "protector." He argued that this association can be seen in the times Varuṇa is called upon to grant protection (vārūtha), e.g. RV VII 88.6 and VIII 42.2. Like Renou, however, he does not test his theory against the functions of Varuṇa in detail.

⁹Petersson 1918: 223ff. Followed also by Dandekar 1940: 183.

also in varatrā́, "thong," as well as in words of other IE languages. Varuṇa is therefore the "binder," which accords with his belief that the words mitrá, aryamán, and ādityá also represent different kinds of binding or unbinding. In Güntert's view, Varuṇa, with Mitra and Aryaman, hold all men in their mighty bonds, which are the laws that determine how men should act. What distinguishes Varuṇa is that, in opposition to Mitra, who represents the "Bande der Freundschaft und der Verträge" (p. 120), Varuṇa represents the bonds that hold the lesser in the power of the greater, especially those bonds which keep men in the power of the gods (pp. 123f.). Unlike Mitra, who is a protector of men, Varuṇa is the punisher of those who violate his laws. He works in invisible ways, through his magic powers, to bind the transgressors in inescapable fetters. All this leads to a fear before this mysterious, ominous god and therefore makes comprehensible the opposition of Mitra/light versus Varuṇa/darkness.

This analysis has much to recommend it, especially in its insistence that the character of Varuṇa must be explained with regard to his rule over the actions of men. Furthermore, Güntert's belief that Varuṇa personifies a relation between "greater" and "lesser" is also, as I hope to show, exactly right. In its details, however, his explanation goes awry. First, there is insufficient evidence in the RV to posit an opposition between Mitra and Varuṇa, and second, the interpretation of Varuṇa as "binder" is only rather generally appropriate to his functions in the RV instead of being specifically required.

Perhaps the most elaborate attempt to find a more specific interpretation of Varuṇa and to account for his many roles was that of Lüders.¹⁰ According to him, the chief characteristics of Varuṇa are that, as a king, he guards

¹⁰ See especially Lüders 1951-59 I: 28-40.

the truth (ṛtá) and dwells in the waters. What interpretation of Varuṇa could adequately account for both these functions? Lüders' answer is that Varuṇa is a god of oaths or the personification of oath.¹¹ He is associated with the waters because it was on water that in the oldest times oaths were sworn. Furthermore, since the god of oaths guards the truthfulness of the vows of men and punishes those who violate their oaths, Varuṇa had constantly to pass judgment on the truths and lies of men. This latter characteristic is the basis for his kingship, for in Vedic India the person who was the foremost judge was the king himself. Also, as guardian of the truth, Varuṇa is the omnipotent lord of all that is governed by the truth, including the actions of men, the processes of nature, and even the conduct of the gods. Varuṇa, along with Mitra and Aryaman, is the god to whom men appeal for forgiveness for their offenses because the foremost offenses of humans are untruth and deception. The fear of men that they may commit such an offense and fall victim to the vengeance of Varuṇa explains why in the later period he was pictured as a fearful and almost demonic figure. This interpretation is compatible with the character of Mitra, for "oath" and "contract" are in the closest relationship in India. Even the ceremonies at the settlement of a contract are analogous to those at the taking of an oath.

Clearly Lüders' theory meets many of my initial criteria. Still, the meaning "oath" was established in a fairly general way, instead of on the basis of particular passages in which this meaning of the word is suggested. Then too, Lüders' choice of chief characteristics of Varuṇa

¹¹ Lüders 1951-59 I: 3 n.2, also derives the name from vr̥ "enclose, confine." It means "oath" because the oath is that which "confines" someone's actions in some way. So also Hiersche 1956: 359ff.

is questionable. Are not the protection he offers and the commandments he ordains just as basic? Also, Lüders overestimates the importance of the oath upon water, as well as the place of Varuṇa in the swearing of an oath. Schlerath (1960a: 153ff.) argued that oaths upon water co-existed along with those on fire and plants, even in the period of the RV. Why then does Varuṇa dwell especially in water? Furthermore, Schlerath pointed out, in VII 104 not only Varuṇa but also Agni, Soma, and, to a lesser extent, Indra are invoked as the guardians of the oath. On the whole, therefore, Lüders is not finally persuasive.

Another possible interpretation of Varuṇa originated with Meillet.¹² When he examined the meaning of mitrá, he also proposed a new etymology for várūṇa. Both this word and Vedic vrata (Av. urvāta) were derived from an IE root *wer "speak," which also appeared in Sl. rota "oath," Gk. hrētra "contract." Varuṇa, he thus went on to suggest, means "loi, contrat." Thieme adopted this etymology of várūṇa, but rejected the meanings proposed by Meillet, preferring instead a meaning that was compatible with Lüders' theory that Varuṇa was a god of oaths. His conjecture was that Varuṇa means "true speech, spoken truth," of which an oath is one particular form.¹³ He sought to establish this theory by examining specific passages in the RV in which várūṇa appeared in this appellative meaning.

Again, there are several problems with this view. First, "true speech" is a very general notion; such a concept could suggest a variety of interpretations for Varuṇa's particular function. Second, "true speech" is not the kind of concept expected alongside mitrá "alliance." Rather, we would look for a principle that similarly dictates the relationships of men to

¹²Meillet 1907: 157ff.

¹³Cf. Thieme 1957a: 61ff. and 1973: 347.

one another. However, the suggestion that vrata "commandment" may come from the same root as várūṇa is a very attractive one, for it is just that kind of concept which could be represented by Varuṇa.

A close association between vrata and várūṇa would also supply an answer to an otherwise puzzling lacuna. Early Indic and Iranian texts attest:

<u>mitrá</u> n. (<u>miṣra</u> m.)	alliance
<u>mitrá</u> m. (<u>miṣra</u> m.)	god of alliances
<u>mitrá</u> m.	ally
<u>mitryā</u>	allied

I shall show later that there is also:

<u>aryamán</u> n. (lx), m.	custom
<u>aryamán</u> m. (<u>airyaman</u> ?)	god of customs
<u>aryamán</u> m. (gAv. <u>airyaman</u>)	ally by custom
<u>aryamyā</u>	allied by custom

But for várūṇa, there is only várūṇa m. This difficulty disappears if vrata functions as a suppletive stem to várūṇa, for then there is:

<u>vrata</u> n. (<u>urvāta</u> n.)	commandment
<u>várūṇa</u> m.	god of commandments
gAv. <u>urvaṇa</u> m.	ally under a commandment
<u>varuṇyā</u>	allied under a commandment

The idea that Varuṇa is the personification of the concept represented by vrata was already suggested by Meillet. As I mentioned, he maintained that várūṇa means "law" or "contract." So also, he glossed the etymologically related vrata as "volenté divine, loi"¹⁴ and elsewhere translated it as

¹⁴Meillet 1907: 157.

"contrat" and "ordre universal." However, he left unclear the exact nature of the relationship of Varuṇa and vrata. It was rather Schmidt, in his monograph on vrata (1958), who made explicit the close connection of the two. He noted that since the names of Mitra and Aryaman define their characteristic domains, Varuṇa's name ought to do so also, and he too held that vrata was the missing concept which identified that domain. The only essential point on which I cannot follow Schmidt is in his theory of the meaning of vrata.

vrata

Schmidt (1958: 16f.) accepted both Lüders' interpretation of Varuṇa as the god of oaths as well as Meillet's idea that the name of the god was related to vrata. If vrata in the RV means "vow" (Gelübde), as it does in post-Vedic Sanskrit, then these two theories can be reconciled with one another.¹⁵ To test whether this might be the case, Schmidt reviewed all the occurrences of vrata in the RV and AV. His conclusion was that vrata does indeed mean "vow" and that in the RV, vrata usually refers to the vows between men and gods. The gods vow to create and sustain the world for men, and in return, men vow to offer gifts and worship to the gods. That is to say, these vows constitute the sacrificial compact.

Though Schmidt's work is a model of clarity and thoroughness, I find the more traditional understanding of vrata as "commandment, ordinance" more convincing. More specifically, the word designates 1) the

¹⁵ Schmidt defines a vow as "eine Art von promissorischem Eid" and "ein feierliches Versprechen, durch das Verträge und Freundschaftskünde geschlossen werden" (p. 143). Hacker (1973), who rejects Schmidt's thesis, questions whether vrata is rightly understood as a vow, defined in this way, even in the post-Rgvedic period (pp. 109ff.).

"commandment" or "obligation" itself; 2) an action which is governed by a commandment and so is considered an expression of that commandment; and 3) "authority," the power to command, to oblige someone to do something.¹⁶

A complete discussion of all the attestations of vrata is not possible

¹⁶ For a review of the older literature on vrata, see Schmidt 1958: 7-14. The meanings "Gesetz, Gebot, Ordnung" already appear among those offered by the PW and by Grassmann (1872). In his review of Schmidt's monograph, Schlerath (1960b: 193) likewise reaffirms "Satzung, Gebot" as the Grundbedeutung of vrata (cf. also Insler 1975: 175f.). Other suggestions and variations on earlier proposals, however, were also put forward during the discussion which Schmidt's book occasioned. Thus, for example, Schmid (1960: 47) suggests that the vrata of the gods is their "promise" (Verheissung) and that the vrata of men is the "calling" (Berufung) which the promise of the god implies. Wüst (1961: 416f.) argues that the term meant "the order of existence (Daseins-ordnung), the order of life as the dominion of the gods (Lebensordnung also Herrschaftsbereich der Götter)" or, for men, the "way of living" (Lebensführung, Lebensweise, Lebensform).

The most extended reconsideration of the problem is that of Hacker (1973). He not only rejects Schmidt's thesis, but also objects to the interpretation of vrata as "Gesetz, etc." for these terms, he says, are too abstract, too external to the action supposed to be governed by them. According to him, a vrata is established by a concrete action, not by an act of commanding (cf. p. 121). The obedience which a vrata demands is not obedience to a command, but the necessary adaptation of human action to conform with the work of the gods in the cosmos, or rather, to the intention embedded in these works (p. 122). In order to translate the term, however, he concedes that it may be necessary to fall back on the suggestions of Roth and Grassmann, to which he adds also "Wirkungsbereich" (after Haebler 1960: sp. 300) and "Werkordnung."

Hacker is probably right in denying a simple equivalence of vrata to the concept "commandment" or "ordinance." On the other hand, I find many of his convolutions of language and complications of thought to be unnecessary. They occur because he is searching for a concept which will embrace both the ideas of "Gesetz, etc." and of "Werk," which are the two basic meanings proposed by Roth and Grassmann. In different contexts, however, a word may have somewhat different senses. Just as sometimes mānāḥ means "mind" and sometimes the product of a mind, "thought," so also vrata sometimes refers to an "ordinance" and sometimes, more concretely to the action which embodies that ordinance.

However the nuances of the word are to be explained, these critics agree on two important points: a vrata is authoritative, imposed by one being on another, and, in the RV at least, it normally implies the regulation of human behavior. The first of these two points is the central notion which I wish to emphasize, and it is the notion which disappears in Schmidt's analysis.

here. Instead, I shall try to answer those arguments that Schmidt presses against understanding vrata as "commandment" and support my position by citing passages where this translation is more probable than Schmidt's.

Schmidt poses three interlocking arguments against the translation "commandment." First, the gods themselves observe vratāni although they are not subject to any higher judgment (p. 143). Second, the cosmological and cosmogonic acts of the gods, accomplished according to their vratāni, are not for the benefit of themselves, as acts according to "commandments" would be, but for the benefit of men (pp. 23, 143). Third, the acts of gods and men which follow vratāni belong to the sphere of contract and friendship services, not to those based on superior-inferior relationships (pp. 16f., 27, 37, 82).

In his review of Schmidt's work, Schlerath (1960b: 99) offered a refutation of Schmidt's first argument. He says, "es wäre ja denkbar, dass die Götter dem Gebot ihres eigenen Wesens, ihrer Natur gehorchen, dass sie die Satzungen befolgen, die ihnen durch die Ordnung der Welt gesetzt sind." Thus, in this interpretation, Indra would hold heaven and earth apart and make the waters flow in accordance with the law or command of his own nature, since the essence of being Indra is to perform these acts. Indeed, in RV IV 18.2cd, there is clearly a sense of destiny in Indra's words when he says, bahūni me ākṛtā kṛtvāni, yúdhyaī tvena sām tvena prchai "Many deeds, (as yet) undone, are to be done by me: I shall fight with one and make peace with another." This explanation is also possible in view of the close connection in Vedic thought between the identity and action of a divinity. Compare X 8.5b bhūvo varuṇo yád ṛtāya

véṣi "You, (Agni), will become Varuṇa when you pursue the truth"¹⁷ and the frequent statement that a god accomplishes a certain action ānu svadhām "according to his own nature."¹⁸

Nevertheless, I think a simpler solution is preferable. Namely, the vrata of the gods simply represents their will that a certain thing shall be accomplished. It is of little consequence whether the action expressing this will is carried out by the god himself or another. Let us consider two verses which might support Schmidt's thesis:

VIII 42.1 āstabhnād dyām āsuro viśvávedā
 āmimīta varimānam pṛthivyāḥ
 āsīdad viśvā bhūvanāni samrāḍ
 viśvét tāni varuṇasya vratāni

The lord who knows everything has propped up the sky. He has measured out the breadth of the earth. The universal king has put all creatures in their places. All these are the commandments of Varuṇa.

and

III 6.5 vratā te agne mahatō mahāni
 tāva krātvā ródasī ā tatantha
 tvām dūtō abhavo jāyamānas
 tvām netā vṛṣabha carṣaṇīnām

Great are the commandments of you, the great one, Agni: in accordance with your intention you have spanned the two worlds. At your birth, you became the messenger and the leader of the peoples, o bull.

According to the first passage, Varuṇa ordains the organization of heaven, earth, and the creatures in the world. The acts which bring about this organization of creation are called vratāni because they are the concrete

¹⁷Cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 13.

¹⁸Cf. Schmidt 1958: 19.

expressions of his commandment that the world shall be thus. Similarly, in III 6.5, the union of men and gods in the sacrifice is seen as the expression of Agni's will. In that he is the mediator of the sacrifice, Agni himself performs those actions which bring to realization that will. These actions too, therefore, are called vratāni.¹⁹

Likewise unconvincing is Schmidt's second argument that vratā cannot mean commandment because the acts accomplished through a god's vratāni are not for the sake of the god but for men. It would be quite possible that a god, or any ruler for that matter, could command something to be done for someone else. In the account of creation in Gn. II 4-25, for example, Yahweh is expressly described as creating the birds, beasts, and woman for the benefit of man, with no suggestion at all that Yahweh was profiting from it. Or even if there is the expectation that humanity must respond to the acts of the gods with worship, these acts themselves could be effected through the commandment of the gods and not in fulfillment of an agreement.

Finally, Schmidt argued that the vratāni of the gods belong to the sphere of contract and friendship. Thus, for example, in VIII 48.9cd yāt te vayām pramināma vratāni, sá no mṛṣa suṣakhā deva vásyah, Schmidt (p. 45) sees a parallel between vratā and suṣakhí "close comrade" and translates, "Wenn wir dir (Soma) die Gelübde täuschen, so verzeih uns gnädig als guter Freund, o Gott." But if there is a relationship between vratāni and suṣakhā here, it is one of counterbalance, not of similarity. Although the vratāni have been violated, the poet hopes to retain the

¹⁹ To translate vratā here as "deed" or "act" (e.g. Grassmann 1872: sp. 1362) is very misleading because it fails to capture the important characteristic of these actions--that they are ordained by the god. Since the verse is perfectly intelligible with "commandment" as the translation for vratā, I will continue to use that gloss in similar contexts.

friendship of the god and to be forgiven. A more probable translation would then be: "Even if we shall violate your commandments, being a close comrade, have mercy upon us, o god. Better (is that)."

Furthermore, even a cursory inspection of his own outline of words other than vratā in contexts characteristic of vratā shows a preponderance of words meaning "will," "intention," "rule," etc. over those meaning "friendship," "contract," etc. Thus, for example, the following nouns occur as the objects of the same verbs and prepositions as vratā:

<u>sakhyā</u>	"comradeship"	1x
<u>saṃgir</u>	"agreement"	1x
<u>mitrā</u>	"alliance"	1x
<u>svarājya</u>	"lordship over one's own"	3x
<u>kṣatrā</u>	"rule"	6x
<u>kratú</u>	"will, intention"	10x
<u>ketā</u>	"intention"	4x
<u>rāṣṭrā</u>	"dominion"	1x
<u>jōṣa</u>	"pleasure, will"	6x
<u>vāśa, vāśa</u>	"will"	6x
<u>(prā)diś</u>	"direction"	5x
<u>śāśuh</u>	"instruction, order"	1x
<u>svadhā</u>	"own nature"	13x
<u>mānaḥ</u>	"thought"	1x
<u>nivīd</u>	"instruction, direction"	2x

All but the first three involve the word or will of a superior governing an inferior.²⁰

Not only is "commandment" a possible translation of vratā, but there are passages where "vow" is nearly impossible and "commandment" extremely likely. The vratā of Savitar, as Schmidt (p. 82) concedes, is difficult to interpret as anything other than his commandment. In II 38.2, for example, Savitar is portrayed as a king, issuing his decree with a gesture of command:

²⁰ See Schmidt 1958: 17ff. from which this summary is extracted. Omitted are pathí, ádhvān, sádah, rocanā, prthivī, and kṣéma, which are not relevant here.

II 38.2 viśvasya hí śruṣṭāye devā ūrdhvāh
prā bāhāvā prthupāṇiḥ śisarti
āpās cid asya vratā ā nīmṛgrā
ayām cid vāto ramate párijman

So then, to have the obedience of all, the lofty, broad-palmed god stretches forth his two arms. At his commandment, even the waters are still; even the wind now stops on its course.

Note that the response of Savitar's vratā is obedience (śruṣṭi).²¹ It is an authoritative declaration which demands submission.

A similar description of Savitar in his gesture of command occurs in

IV 53.4:

IV 53.4 ādābhyo bhūvanāni pracākaśad
vratāni devāḥ savitābhī rakṣate
prāsrāg bāhū bhūvanasya prajābhyo
dhṛtāvratō mahó ājmasya rājati

Unable to be deceived, the god Savitar guards his commandments as he watches constantly over the creatures. He has stretched forth his two arms to the offspring of creation. He whose commandments are upheld is king of the great passage.^{22,23}

As the middle voice of rakṣate in IV 53.4 indicates, the vratāni belong to Savitar, not to men or the sun, as Schmidt interpreted.²⁴

²¹For this same juxtaposition of vratā and śruṣṭi, cf. I 69.7, 128.1 and Insler 1975: 175f.

²²Schmidt rightly accepted Geldner's (RVÜ I: 484) first alternative interpretation of mahó ājmasya as "die grosse Bahn der Sonnenpferde (wie I 163.10)."

²³The outstretched arms of Savitar have been otherwise interpreted. For Oldenberg (1897: 479), it is the gesture of taking the whole world in his embrace in order to set it in motion. Güntert (1923: 160) saw the outstretched arms of Savitar as "die Gebärde des Befehlens," but put rather too much emphasis on what he saw as the magical or priestly significance of this gesture.

²⁴A survey of the examples Schmidt gives of vratām rakṣ (pp. 55ff.) shows that only when rakṣ is active, as in I 93.8; IX 37.5, 73.3, does (contd.)

Other passages also strongly suggest the meaning "commandment" for vratā because the one to whom the vratā is directed has no choice but is simply the subject of the person imposing the vratā. If vratā were "vow," at least some element of consent, even if only a formal one, ought to be possible for both parties. Consider, for example:

V 83.5 yāsyā vraté prthivī nānnamīti
yāsyā vraté śaphāvaj jārbhurīti
yāsyā vratā ōsadhīr viśvárūpāḥ
sā naḥ parjanya māhi śārma yacha

At whose commandment the earth always submits, at whose commandment the hoofed one always springs forth, at whose commandment the plants become all shapes, do you, Parjanya, offer us great shelter.

In the poet's eyes, the building thunder is the commandment of the god of the storm to which all nature abjectly responds. The vratā here is no vow to send rain, but an expression of Parjanya's authority over creation and creatures.

Again, in IX 9.5 tā abhī sántam ástṛtam, mahé yúvānam ā dadhuḥ, índum
indra táva vraté, Schmidt (1958: 74f.) translated: "Diese (himmlischen Flüsse) haben den überlegenen, unüberwindlichen, den jungen (irdischen) dem grossen (himmlischen) hinzugefügt, den Saft (Tropfen), unter dem Gelübde zu dir, Indra" and commented that "Die Flüsse sorgen als Indras Gattinnen auch dafür, dass das himmlische Soma-becken, aus dem Indra trinkt, niemals

a god guard the vratāni of someone else. Cf. also V 63.7 dhārmanā mitrā-varuṇā vipāścitā, vratā rakṣethe āsurasya māyāyā, rtēna viśvam bhūvanam vi rājathaḥ, sūryam ā dhattho divi citryam rātham "Through your institute, o Mitra and Varuṇa, you who understand inspired words, do you guard your commandments with the mysterious power of a lord. You two rule the whole creation through truth. You two place the sun, as a brilliant chariot, in heaven." Cf. Hacker 1973: 113.

leer wird." But the point of the passage is rather to emphasize that Soma has been brought by these rivers to Indra. Therefore, táva vraté in line c ought to refer to the position Soma now has, as Lüders (1951-59 I: 245) and Geldner (RVÜ III:16) have realized, and not to the action of the rivers in bringing the soma. What is the position which Soma has in regard to Indra? Since Soma here is described as taking no action in this matter but as simply being given to Indra, the passage can not mean that Soma has made a "vow" to serve Indra. Rather he is under the will of Indra. He is the subject of that god's commandments. "Commandment" or "authority," therefore, translates vratá more satisfactorily: "They have delivered the young one, being superior and unable to be defeated, to (you) the great one, o Indra, that drop under your commandment."²⁵

But this concept of vratá can be viewed in several ways. So far I have examined it from the viewpoint of the commander and "his vratāni" means simply the commandments issued by him. From the perspective of the subject to whom the vratá is given, "his vratāni" means the commandments directed to him, the obligations he must fulfill. In many of these instances, "obligation" is perhaps even the best translation of vratá, as, for example, in I 93.8abc yó agníśómā haviṣā saparyād, devadrīcā mānasā yó ghr̥tēna, tāsya vratām rakṣatam pātām āphasah "Guard the obligation of that person, who shall serve Agni and Soma with his oblation, with thought directed towards the gods, and with ghee. Protect him from distress." Agni and Soma should help the pious sacrificer fulfill his religious commitments, his "obligations" to the gods.²⁶ Since it is the worshipper's obligation

²⁵ Cf. also AV VII 40 (41).1 and Schmidt 1958: 61f.; Schlerath 1960b: 194.

²⁶ According to Hacker (1973: 126), vratá here and in VII 103.1 has already developed the meaning it has in the later Veda. It refers to a vow, but a vow as "das Sichanpassen also Nachvollzug eines festliegenden Verhaltensmodells." Even if this interpretation is correct, vratá is still a kind of obligation.

to fulfill his religious duties, the gods will protect him in order that he may continue his worship. Similar also is X 37.5 in which Sūrya, as the eye of the gods,²⁷ is described as watching over men: X 37.5a viśvasya hí prēṣito rākṣasi vratām "For you, having been sent forth, guard the obligation of everyone." Again, the idea is that the sun watches over all men in order to ensure that each man will follow his particular obligations. Finally, various commitments are described in IX 112.1:

IX 112.1a-d nānānām vā u no dhīyo
vī vratāni jānānām
tākṣā riṣṭām rutām bhiṣāg
brahmā sunvāntam ichati

Truly, in different ways (go) our thoughts. Separate (are) the obligations of men: the carpenter seeks a broken (object), the doctor, a fractured (limb), the priest, a (soma-)presser.

Each person has a certain role to perform, a rule of action which is defined by his vratāni.²⁸

In summary, Rgvedic vratá is not a "vow," but rather a "commandment," an ordinance given by a superior authority. Nothing in the word's employment in the RV prohibits this interpretation. If the gods obey their own

²⁷ Cf. Lommel 1953: 330.

²⁸ The Iranian cognate of vratá, urvāta, must also be interpreted as "commandment." In Y 30.11, for example, Zarathuštra says that the urvātā of Ahura Mazdah must be "learned" (sak) by men, who must abide by them. Surely these are commands, handed down by the god. So also, in Y 31.1, Zarathuštra calls the words of Ahura Mazdah his urvātā, but in vs. 18, he calls these words "precepts" (maṭra) and "instructions" (sāsnā), which again imply that they are words of authority and commandment. Cf. also Y 31.1, 34.8, 44.15 and Insler 1975: 176f.

Alongside urvāta, there is also a term urvaṭa, which is the complementary nomen actionis (cf. Humbach 1952: 4). In the Gāthās, it refers to those who are allies of Ahura Mazdah and of one another because they are obedient to the urvāta, the commandment, of Ahura Mazdah.

vratāni, it is because they alone have the power to bring about their will. If they make vratāni for the benefit of their subjects and not only for themselves, it is because they are concerned for the welfare of the world. Moreover, the words which commonly parallel vrata belong to the sphere of superior-inferior relationships and therefore suggest that vrata too may define such a relationship.

Further, a number of passages virtually exclude the interpretation of vrata as "vow." Thus, Savitar's vratāni as he dictates the course of nature (II 38.2; IV 53.4) are surely his commandments. Likewise, the creatures respond to vratāni, not as parties to a compact, but as subjects to a superior (V 83.5; IX 9.5). From the point of view of the obedient subject, the vrata is an "obligation" to which he must submit.

Two other observations on the passages examined thus far can refine our conception of vrata. First, we have seen that the vratāni govern activities in both the natural and social worlds. It is through his vrata, for example, that Savitar rules both the animate and the inanimate. Likewise, as we shall soon see, Varuṇa directs both men and creatures in accordance with his vrata. But the emphasis is clearly on the regulation of human activity through the vrata.²⁹ Second, vrata is a commandment and not a military "command." This is true even where the RV speaks of the vratāni of Indra, for in these contexts Indra appears not as a warrior but as a king who governs activities other than military ones.³⁰ For example,

²⁹Cf. especially Wüst (1961: 416, 418), who holds that vrata as "Daseins-, Lebens-ordnung" complements ṛta "Weltordnung."

³⁰Cf. Schlerath 1960a: 26ff., 53ff., 75ff.

in I 83.3, men dwell in peace under Indra: I 83.3c ásamyatto vraté te kseti púṣyate "Without conflict, he dwells in peace and flourishes under your commandment, (Indra)." Elsewhere the waters flow in accordance with the commandment of Indra (I 62.10; II 24.12; VII 47.3), and both gods (III 32.8) and wise men (VII 31.11) adhere to his precepts. As a "commandment," therefore, vrata contrasts with śásuḥ, for example, which is a military command. Compare I 116.13cd śrutám tác chāsura iva vadhṛimatya, híraṇyahastam aśvināḥ adattam "You two hearkened to that (cry) of Vadhṛimatī as if it were a command. You two gave Hiraṇyahasta (to her), Áśvins." Here the Áśvins run to the call of Vadhṛimatī like a warrior troop to the order of its commander.

varuṇa

This chapter began with the suggestion that Varuṇa might be the god of vrata or the personification of vrata. In order to determine the significance of this hypothesis, I examined the use of vrata in the RV and came to the conclusion that it means "commandment, authority." Now then, what evidence is there that Varuṇa really is the god of vrata, beyond a possible etymological relationship between Varuṇa and vrata? Schmidt (1958: 16) points out one important point: although many different gods have their vrata, it is the Ādityas, and above all Varuṇa, who are most characteristically associated with the concept. According to Schmidt's tabulation, of the 84 attestations of vrata in the RV, 31 connect vrata with Varuṇa, Varuṇa + Mitra, Varuṇa + Mitra + Savitar, the Ādityas, and Aditi.

At best, however, such evidence establishes the possibility that Varuṇa is the god of vrata. Further and more direct evidence is necessary

to demonstrate it. Are there, for example, passages in which várūṇa itself suggests a meaning like that of vrata or even is used in place of vrata? I believe there are: the poets use várūṇa ambiguously as both a proper noun and in the meaning "commandment" by employing várūṇa in constructions characteristic of vrata or in juxtaposition with concepts similar to "commandment." Both techniques appear, for example, in X 36.12:

X 36.12abc mahó agnēḥ samidhānāsya śármaṇy
 ánāgā mitré várūṇe svastāye
 śréṣṭhe syāma savitúḥ sávīmani

We would be under the protection of great Agni when he is kindled, without offense under mitrá and várūṇa for our well-being, and under the best compelling commandment³¹ of Savitar.

The parallel locatives śármaṇi ... mitré várūṇe ... sávīmani suggest that mitrá and várūṇa cannot be merely names for gods, but rather, like śárman and sávīman, are principles under which the poet desires to live. The word mitrá causes no difficulty. It could be understood in its appellative sense. In this case we could translate, "We would be without offense under (our) alliance." It is várūṇa which is difficult.

Geldner (RVÜ III: 188) takes the locative to mean "before" Mitra and Varuṇa.³² But this interpretation is not only against the parallelism of the locatives on either side; it also violates the syntax of ánāgaḥ. The locative with ánāgaḥ does not specify the god "before" whom one is without offense; rather, it designates that principle with regard to which one is without offense. There are two unambiguous examples of this construction. One is V 82.6 ánāgaso áditaye, devásya savitúḥ savé, víśvā vāmāni dhīmahi "Being offenseless for the sake of our innocence"³³

³¹See the section on savitár and related words, below pp. 308-314.

³²So also Renou EVP VII: 53.

³³See below, pp. 204f.

under the compelling commandment [or 'authority'] of the god Savitar, we would receive all desirable things." The sense of savitúḥ savé is that the poet fulfills the dictates laid down by Savitar and therefore is without offense. Even more telling is I 24.15, in which ánāgaḥ with the locative occurs beside vrata: I 24.15cd áthā vayám āditya vraté tává, -nāgaso áditaye syāma "So then, Āditya [= Varuṇa], we would be offenseless for the sake of our innocence under your commandment [or 'authority']." Again, the poet hopes he will be offenseless by keeping the commandment of Varuṇa.

Returning then to X 36.12, both the parallelism within the passage itself and its syntax require us to take várūṇa in its appellative sense. That parallel passages employ vrata (I 24.15) and its close synonym savá (V 82.6) in the exact syntactic position of várūṇa indicates what that sense must be. In this passage, várūṇa must suggest the meaning "commandment, authority" and therefore, we might translate X 36.12b "We would be without offense under the alliance and authority (of the gods) for our well-being." In this interpretation, the poet says he should be judged as offenseless because he keeps his alliance with the gods and adheres to the commandments of the gods.

But várūṇa is not just the equivalent of vrata. Unlike mitrá, várūṇa is not a common noun which can be used without any reference to the god whose name it is. Therefore, várūṇe cannot mean simply "under the authority" the way mitré might mean "under the alliance." The locative várūṇe must stand for "under the authority of the god of authority, Varuṇa." Thus, whereas the poet of I 24.15 asks Varuṇa that he be "offenseless under your authority" (vraté táva), the poet of X 36.12 expresses the same thing in

a more compact fashion by asking to be offenseless "under várūṇa." Just as mitrá in this verse refers to both Mitra and the mitrá "alliance" he governs, so várūṇa is both Varuṇa and vrata.

This same employment of várūṇa to do duty for both vrata and Varuṇa also occurs in a fourth passage which uses ánāgāḥ with the locative. This verse is VII 87.7ab yó mṛláyāti cakrúṣe cid āgo, vayám syāma várūṇe ánāgāḥ "We would be offenseless under (the commandments of) Varuṇa, who will have mercy on even the person who commits an offense." The parallelism of X 36.12 and I 24.15 shows that várūṇa must retain its appellative meaning, but the relative clause in line a requires that várūṇa be understood as the name of the god as well.³⁴

A similar use of várūṇe to mean "under the commandment or authority of Varuṇa" appears in VII 86.2:

VII 86.2 utá sváyā tanvā sám vade tát
 kadā nv antár várūṇe bhuvāni
 kím me havyam āhrṇāno juṣeta
 kadā mṛlīkām sumānā abhī khyam

Moreover, I discuss this with myself: "Now when shall I be within várūṇa? Might he, no longer being angry, enjoy my oblation? When shall I happily look upon his mercy?"

Geldner's translation (RVÜ II: 257) of line b, "Wann werde ich wohl dem Varuṇa nahe kommen?" conceals the peculiarity of the expression antár

³⁴A similar word play involving mitrá occurs in III 59.1a mitró jánān yātayati bruvānāḥ "Mitra, when he is spoken, organizes the peoples." On the one hand, the line means that, when the god of alliances is invoked at the conclusion of an alliance, people assume new relationships with one another according to that alliance and under the watchful eye of Mitra. But it has a second, "ungrammatical" and implied, meaning: alliances themselves are instituted by spoken agreement and they organize the peoples. Here mitrá intends both Mitra and "alliance." For the translation and interpretation of this line, see Thieme 1957a: 39f.

várūṇe. Nor is his a likely interpretation of the phrase, for when antár is used with a god it still means "within" and not "next to." Compare, for example, VII 11.3ab trís cid aktóḥ prá cikitur vásūni, tvé antár dāsúṣe mártýāya "Thrice, from early morning, goods become visible within you, (Agni), for the mortal who serves you."³⁵ A poet can speak of wealth figuratively manifesting itself in the sacrificial fire, but what is the sense of being "within" a god like Varuṇa?

First, note that there is a rare use of antár with abstracts which, as one might expect, means "within" the state of such-and-such. This appears in VI 4.4d rājeva jer avṛké kṣeṣy antáh "Like a king, (Agni), you have conquered and (now) dwell in safety" and X 124.3d-4a ayajñiyād vajñīyam bhāgām emi, bahvīḥ sámā akaram antár asmin "From having no (part) in the worship, I moved to a part in the worship. For many years, I worked in this (condition)." Therefore, "within várūṇa" might mean "within the authority of Varuṇa." If so, then the poet is asking that he be returned to the control and protection of the god of commandments, who has apparently forsaken him. In this verse too, therefore, várūṇa is ambiguously "authority, commandment" and "Varuṇa, god of commandments."

Further, in VII 86.2, the poet also says that he hopes someday to be again happy when he is "within várūṇa." Parallel to this, we are told elsewhere that men flourish "under the authority" (vraté) of the gods. Compare II 28.2a táva vraté subhāgāsaḥ syāma "May we be of good fortune under your authority, (Varuṇa)" and I 83.3c ásamvyatto vraté te kṣeti puṣyati "Without conflict, he dwells in peace and flourishes under your authority,

³⁵Cf. III 55.15, also of Agni.

(Indra)."³⁶ Again, these parallels suggest that to be antár várūṇe is to be within the authority of Varuṇa.

Finally, in the last line of VII 86.2, the poet prays that his current state of being "outside várūṇa" will be rectified when he finds mercy from the angry god. In the same way, a person who violates the commandment (vrata) of the god begs for mercy, e.g. VIII 48.9cd yát te vayám pramināma vratāni, sá no mṛṣa suśakhā deva vásyah "Even if we shall violate your commandments, being a close comrade, have mercy upon us. Better (is that)."³⁷ Thus again várūṇa is in a syntactic and contextual position otherwise characteristic of vrata.

Another passage in which várūṇa replaces an expected vrata or várūṇasya vrata is X 89.9:

X 89.9 prá yé mitráṃ prāryamāṇaṃ durévāḥ
 prá saṃgírah prá várūṇaṃ minānti
 ny àmitréṣu vadhām indra túmram
 ... śísīhi

Sharpen your mighty weapon, Indra, against (our) enemies, (those) who, evil-minded, violate an alliance, custom, agreements, and várūṇa.

Thieme has already noticed that the structure and syntax of this passage require that all the names be taken in an appellative sense.³⁸ First, the parallelism of mitráṃ ... aryamāṇaṃ ... várūṇaṃ ... saṃgírah, as well as the sense of the passage, indicate that the first three terms cannot be understood merely as names of gods, but that like saṃgír they must be taken

³⁶Cf. also X 57.6 and 60.4.

³⁷Similarly, I 25.1-3, 5, and X 25.3.

³⁸Thieme 1941: 88, 95; 1957a: 62.

as expressions which define kinds of relations among men. Since mitrá can mean "alliance" and aryamán "custom," these two fit easily into the expected pattern. If várūṇa is the "commandment" (of Varuṇa), it then complements the other three. Thieme's suggestion that várūṇa means "true speech" breaks the continuity of the series, for "true speech" is not a principle which regulates human actions as are the others. "Authority, commandment," on the other hand, fit perfectly.

The employment of várūṇa as the object of prá mī in X 89.9 points in the same direction. The object of prá mī is elsewhere never a god or a man, but rather a principle. Thus, unless we isolate this passage, várūṇa also must be a principle, not just a name. Furthermore, vrata is a common and characteristic object of prá mī. Compare I 25.1 yác cid dhí te ... prá deva varuṇa vratám, minīmási ... "If we ever, god Varuṇa, violate your commandment ...;" II 24.12b āpás caná prá minanti vratám vām "The waters never violate your commandments, (Mitra and Varuṇa);" and X 10.5c nákir asya prá minanti vratāni "None violate his [= Tvaṣṭar's] commandments."³⁹ Again, adding up this syntactic and contextual evidence provides good reason to see várūṇa as the functional equivalent of vrata.

Yet another passage in which várūṇa is used in an appellative sense is X 97.16:

X 97.16 muñcántu mā śapathyāḍ
 átho varuṇyāḍ utá
 átho yamásya páḍbiṣāt
 sárvasmād devakilbiṣāt

³⁹Cf. also VIII 48.9; X 2.4; 25.3.

Let these (plants) free me from the shackle arising from an oath and also from (that) arising from a commandment, and from the shackle of death. (Let them free me) from every offense against the gods.

As Thieme (1957a: 63f.) saw, this verse shows that the idea of "oath" and várūna are related, but yet they can not be the same. In lines abc, the poet tries to embrace the three types of bonds which control the fate of man. In line a, he mentions those of a fellow man, who can bind through the power of his oath or curse. In line c are described those of the nether world, which will ultimately hold a man in bondage to death. In line b, he refers to those in which heaven holds men. The bondage which arises from the divine commandment is the punishment which is decreed for violation of the will of the gods. Since the divine commandment is personified in Varuṇa, the god of commandments, we could also translate "from the shackle arising from Varuṇa," but the parallelism of śapathyāt and varuṇyāt assures us that the poet is aware of and uses the appellative meaning of várūna.⁴⁰

Some support for the thesis that várūna is the personification of vrata also comes from AV V 1, one of the "mystic" hymns of the AV, although

⁴⁰ Parallel to the form varuṇyā is vratyā (AV: vrátya). This word is attested once each in the RV and in the AV. In both passages, it means "subservient to a commandment, under a commandment." Thus, VIII 48.8ab sóma rājan mṛṇáyā naḥ svastí, táva smasi vratyās tāsya viddhi "King Soma, have mercy on us for our well-being. We are ones subservient to you. Know this." Similar is AV IV 11.11ab dvādaśa vā etā rātrīr, vrátya āhuḥ prajāpateḥ "In truth, these twelve nights, they say, are under the commandment of Prajāpati." That is to say, Prajāpati governs the activities which take place during these twelve nights. Therefore, the two forms varuṇyā and vratyā (vrátya) differ in meaning. But this difference can be easily explained by the wide variety of meanings which derivatives in -ya- can take (cf. Altind. Gr. II, 2 §650a, p. 805). Therefore, it does not constitute an argument for separating várūna and vrata.

much of the hymn is no longer intelligible. According to the Anukramaṇī, this hymn is vāruṇam, although the name of the god who is addressed is suppressed in the hymn itself. However, Renou (1960: 305f.) has argued that there is sufficient reason to accept the tradition that this is a hymn dedicated to Varuṇa. He shows that the names given to the anonymous god of the hymn, such as Trita (vs. 1),⁴¹ and the descriptions of him, such as ā yó dhārmāṇi prathamāḥ sasāda "the foremost one who set down his principles ..." in vs. 2⁴² are particularly appropriate to Varuṇa. Most importantly, the deity of the hymn can only be Varuṇa, because the god finally identifies himself in vs. 7a utāmṛtāsur vrata emi kṛṇvān "Moreover, I of undying existence go as Commandment when I make (my commandments)."⁴³ The shift in accent and gender to vrata m. indicates that the god speaking must represent the personification of commandment (vrata). The poet chose this special name vrata because it reveals the god's true identity without revealing his real name. He recognized Varuṇa as the god of vrata and knew his hearers would also. Thus, while other poets used várūna to mean both "commandment" and the "god of commandments," this poet reverses the technique by inventing a masculine vrata to stand for várūna.

These passages, in which várūna is used for vrata and as the name of the god, provide the most direct evidence that várūna and vrata were

⁴¹ Cf. RV VIII 41.6.

⁴² Cf. VI 70.1; VII 89.5; X 167.3, all of which mention the dhárman or dhārmāṇi of Varuṇa and V 63.7, 72.2; IX 107.15; X 65.5 which mention that of Mitra and Varuṇa.

⁴³ That "commandments" are the understood object of kṛ is supported by RV I 36.5cd ... vrata dhruvā, yāni devā ākṛṇvata "... the enduring commandments which the gods have made."

perceived as similar and complementary terms. But they do not furnish the only evidence. A rather different sort is provided by those verses in which varuṇa functions as an epithet of Agni, and not as the name of an independent deity. In some of these, the poet gives clear indications that Agni bears this name because he acts as a god of commandments or authority. Compare, for example, V 48.5:

V 48.5 sá jihváyā cāturāṇīka ṛñjate
 cāru vāsāno varuṇo yātann arīm
 ná tāsya vidmā puruṣatvātā vayām
 yāto bhāgaḥ savitā dāti vāryam

Clothing himself is what is dear [i.e. ghee], (Agni) of four faces directs (our worship) with his tongue, as he, the god of commandment, organizes the other [= governs every other pious one]. (However), because of our human nature, we do not know the reason whereby Fortune, the compeller, shall grant what is desirable.

Geldner (RVÜ II: 54) emended varuṇaḥ to aruṇaḥ unnecessarily. The language which describes Agni's activity is drawn from the sphere of the Ādityas. Because he acts as an Āditya, and because he commands the worship, he is identified as the immanent form of the greatest Āditya and the god of commandments, Varuṇa.

In line b, where this identification is made, Agni is described as "organizing" (yat) other worshippers of the gods. The term yat is an "Āditya" word, usually associated with Mitra but also with Mitra and Varuṇa. Compare, for example, V 72.2ab vraténa stho dhruvākṣemā, dhārmaṇā yātayājjanā "You (o Mitra and Varuṇa), are those who give enduring peace through your commandment, who organize the peoples according to your principle." Note that the people are arranged through the vrata and dhārman of Mitra and Varuṇa. The poet of V 48.5 expresses a similar idea,

but instead of saying that Agni organizes through his vrata, he identifies Agni as the god of vrata.

Compare also the parallel verse, I 95.7ab úd yamyamīti savitēva bāhū, ubhé sícau yatate bhīmā ṛñján "Like Savitar, (Agni) raises his arms again and again. He organizes both sides [gods and men] as he, the mighty one, directs (the worship)." The verbs yat and ṛñj establish the "Āditya" context, which the poet confirms in comparing Agni to Savitar, who, like Varuṇa, is a god who commands. The poet of V 48.5 likewise completes his portrait of Agni as a ruling god by comparing him to another of the Ādityas. In line d, Agni is called bhāgaḥ savitā, "Fortune, the compeller."⁴⁴ That is to say, Agni rules the fortunes of men and has the authority to direct them as he sees fit.

In another passage, the identification of Agni as varuṇa has a slightly different basis:

VI 3.1 agne sá kṣeṣad ṛtapā ṛtejā
 urú jyótir naśate devayúṣ te
 yām tvām mitrēṇa varuṇaḥ sajóṣā
 dēva pāsi tyājasā mārtaṃ āmhah

O god, which mortal you, as the god of commandments, in agreement with the god of alliance, protect from distress together with abandonment, that (mortal), who protects the truth and produces in the truth, will dwell in peace, o Agni. He who serves the gods will attain your wide light.

The gods of commandment and alliance have the responsibility to guard men who adhere to the truth, that is, who do not violate the commandments given to them or the alliances concluded by him. Since Agni here protects such a person, he exercises a function appropriate to Varuṇa. Because he functions as the god of commandment, he is called the god

⁴⁴On bhāgaḥ savitā, see pp. 308-310.

of commandment.

Thus, the R̥gveda does provide direct evidence that the poets recognized várūṇa as the complement of vratá. In X 36.12, VII 86.2 and X 89.9 (cf. X 47.16) both the syntax and the internal construction of the passages require that várūṇa have an appellative sense. The meaning "commandment" fits the contexts of these verses well, and in several of these passages, várūṇa occurs in a context otherwise characteristic of vratá.

Another kind of evidence is provided by AV V 1.7. Here, since the name vrata substitutes for várūṇa, the poet must see Varuṇa as the personification of vratá "commandment." Finally, in V 48.5 and VI 3.1, Agni, as the ruler of the worship and the protector of the truthful man, is called várūṇa because he functions as a "god of commandment."

Varuṇa

The final test of the hypothesis that Varuṇa is the god of commandments must be whether this conception of the god adequately accounts for his functions in the RV. These functions fall into three categories. First, Varuṇa is the creator and overlord of the natural world. Second, he is king over the peoples, dictating their actions, rewarding and punishing them according to his institutes. Third, he is lord over the waters. The interpretation of Varuṇa as the god of "commandments" can easily explain the first two functions. It is only the third which appears difficult.

Varuṇa's lordship over the cosmos, like his other functions, is shared with Mitra, but often Varuṇa alone is eulogized as the ruler of the natural world. He is the king over heaven and earth (I 25.20). By him heaven and earth are held apart (VI 70.1; VII 86.1; VIII 41.10), and these have been

maintained and expanded by him: IV 42.4abd ahám apó apinvam ukṣamānā, dhārāyaṃ dívaṃ sádana ṛtásya ... utá tridhātu prathayaḍ ví bhūma "I have made swell the ever-growing waters. I have upheld heaven on the seat of truth and (Varuṇa) has spread out the earth three-fold," (cf. vs. 2). He dug a way for the sun (I 24.8; VII 87.1). He has assigned everything to its proper place: V 85.2 vāneṣu vy àntárikṣaṃ tatāna, vājam árvatsu páya usríyāsu, hṛtsú krátuṃ várūṇo apsv àgníṃ, diví sūryam adadhāt sómam ádrau "Varuṇa has stretched out the atmosphere over the trees; he has placed competitiveness in the chargers, milk in the ruddy (cows), determination in (our) hearts, Agni in the waters, the sun in heaven, and Soma on the stone." He has complete knowledge over the workings of the world (I 25.7ff).

If Varuṇa is the god of commandments, these cosmological acts ought to be performed in accordance with his commandment or under his authority. And so they are; cf. VIII 42.1:

VIII 42.1 ástabhnād dyām ásuro víśvávedā
ámimīta varimāṇam pṛthivyāḥ
ásīdad víśvā bhūvanāni samrāḍ
víśvét tāni várūṇasya vratāni

The all-possessing lord has propped up heaven; he has measured the breadth of earth. The universal king has set all creatures in their places. All these are the commandments of Varuṇa.

All time is under the power of Varuṇa and his commandments: VIII 41.10ab yāḥ śvetāñ ádhinirñijaś, cakré kṛṣṇāñ ánu vratá "(Varuṇa), who makes for himself white and black mantles [= the days and nights], according to his commandments." In VI 68.9 Varuṇa, who proclaims mighty commandments, is a great king who watches and controls heaven and earth:

VI 68.9 prá samrāje bṛhaté mánma nú priyám
árca devāya várūṇāya sapráthah

ayām yā urvī mahinā mahivrataḥ

krātvā vibhāty ajāro nā śociṣā

Sing now a hymn dear to the lofty universal king, an extensive one to the god Varuṇa. It is he who, proclaiming mighty commandments, illuminates at will the two wide (worlds) like the unaging (sun) with its brilliance.

Similarly, in I 25.7ff. Varuṇa maintains his authority through his omniscience and thereby governs all the elements of the world:

I 25.7 védā yó vīnām padām
 antārikṣeṇa pātātām
 vēda nāvāḥ samudrīyaḥ

Who knows the track of birds flying through the atmosphere, (who), sea-going, knows the ships,

I 25.8 vēda māsó dhṛtāvrato
 dvādaśa prajāvataḥ
 védā yā upajāyate

(Who), ordaining commandments that are upheld, knows the twelve months and their offspring, who knows (the month) born later,

I 25.10 nī śasāda dhṛtāvrato
 vāruṇaḥ pastyāsv ā
 sāmrajyāya sukrātuḥ

(That god) Varuṇa, whose will is strong and whose commandments are upheld, is installed (as king) among (all) dwelling places for universal sovereignty.⁴⁵

⁴⁵The word pastyā f. poses a difficult problem. There is pastyā n. which means "home, dwelling place" and possibly those who live in a home, the "household." Roth (PW) and Grassmann (1872: sp 797) held that pastyā means very much the same. This interpretation was challenged by Pischel (VSt. II: 211ff.), who argued that pastyā means "waters, river" and his theory has been endorsed by Geldner (RVÜ), Lüders (1951-59 I: 50), Renou (EVP IV: 57) and others.

Clearly the burden of proof lies with those who would sever pastyā and pastyā, for there are a number of Sachwörter in which a fem. ā-stem corresponds to a neuter a-stem of the same or similar meaning. Thus (v) ukhā: (AV) ukhā "cooking vessel;" (AV) varṣā "rainy season;" (v) varṣā "rain;" (v) vānā (lx): (v) vānā "wood" (cf. Altind. Gr. II, 2 §141, pp. 241ff.). Typologically pastyā: pastyā "dwelling place, household" would fit perfectly.

Varuṇa, therefore, rules "through his commandment" -- exactly the way

The basis for Pischel's theory is contextual, but the Rgvedic passages give no compelling reason to abandon the equation of pastyā and pastyā. According to Grassmann, pastyā is attested 10x in the RV: 2x in the sgl. and 8x in the pl. In the two passages in which pastyā is sgl., IV 55.3 and VIII 27.5, it is a proper name. The gen. pl. pastyānām occurs 4x, but this form is ambiguous, for it could be built either to the stem pastyā or pastyā. Geldner takes pastyānām from pastyā in VI 49.9 and VII 97.5 and from pastyā in I 164.30 and IX 65.23

Of the four remaining attestations of pastyā, none unambiguously support Pischel's thesis. In I 25.10, the meaning "in the waters" does not fit the context. Varuṇa is described as understanding all things in space and time. Why in the climax of these verses is he therefore described as entering into the waters? Lüders and Pischel hold that the waters are his special dwelling place, but they lay too much emphasis on this characteristic. Note too that this verse occurs in the Rājasūya and that ŚB V 4.4.5, in commenting upon its meaning, quite rightly interprets pastyā: vīso vai pastyāḥ "In truth, the pastyāḥ are the settlements."

According to Renou, the decisive Rgvedic passage in favor of Pischel's interpretation is IV 1.11ab sā jāyata prathamāḥ pastyāsu, mahó budhné rájaso asyá yónau "As first was (Agni) born amid the pastyāḥ, at the bottom of the great (aerial realm), in the lap of this aerial realm." It is quite true, as Pischel says, that Agni is often said to be born amid the waters, but this need not be true here. More likely, the passage describes Agni's birth "amid the dwelling places (of men)." Support for this interpretation comes from a similar characterization of Agni in II 2.3 tām devā budhné rájasah sudāmsasam, divāspṛthivyor aratīm ny èrire ... agnīm mitrām nā kṣitīṣu praśāmsyam "The gods have installed Agni, whose skill is good, as the pilot of heaven and earth [= between heaven and earth], like a mediator who is to be proclaimed amid the peoples." The installation of Agni "at the bottom of the aerial realm" is clearly as the fire of the worship on earth, from where he takes the offering to the gods.

Similar is X 46.6, in which the installation of Agni, who is addressed as Trita, is again described: X 46.6ab nī pastyāsu tritā stabhūyān, párivīto yónau sīdad antāḥ "Surrounded within the lap [= the fire hole], Trita, who remains fixed, was installed amid the dwelling places (of men)." The verb nī sad is equivalent to nī īr in II 2.3, as Insler (1967: 251 n.3) has already shown, and they both mean "install" someone in a position. In this passage, as in the one previous, the poet refers to the installation of Agni as the fire of the worship. Cf. X 21.7ab tvām yajñésu ṛtvījam, cārum agne nī sedire "They have installed thee, Agni, as the dear ceremoniant amid their worship ceremonies."

The final clear attestation of pastyā is I 40.7cd prā-prā dāsvān pastyābhir asthitā, -ntarvāvat kṣāyam dadhe "he who serves (the gods) has excelled in regard to the dwelling places (of others, for) he receives a dwelling place pregnant (with goods)." The pious man wins a dwelling for himself which surpasses those of others.

The two attestations of pastyānām which Geldner assigns to the stem pastyā lend themselves to either interpretation of pastyā. In both, (contd.)

the "god of commandment" should rule.⁴⁶

More frequently mentioned than his rule over the natural world, however, is Varuṇa's lordship over the world of men. Varuṇa usually shares this rule with Mitra and Aryaman, but there is an important difference between those passages in which Varuṇa appears together with Mitra and/or Aryaman and those in which he appears alone. The former include the whole range of functions which a ruler of men must perform. Mitra and Varuṇa are the leaders of men (VII 60.6) across difficulties (I 41.3; II 27.5) and in accordance with truth (II 27.12). They offer protection (I 41.1; V 62.6; VI 67.2; VII 52.2, 60.8 [with Aryaman], 66.13; VIII 18.21) and keep away all distress (VI 67.8) and danger from enemies (VII 61.3). They watch over all the actions of men (VII 60.3, 61.5, 65.1; VIII 25.9), sometimes by means of their spies (VI 67.5; VII 61.3). They are the punishers of all wrong-doing, both moral (I 122.9, 152.1; VII 60.5, 65.3) and ritual (I 122.9). They become angry at offenses, but can be merciful (I 136.1; VII 62.4; VIII 18.19). They assign men to their proper places (V 72.2; VI 67.1, 3).

I 164.30 and IX 65.23, the phrase mādhya (ā) pastyānām "in the midst of the pastyāh" occurs. But there is insufficient context to determine whether this means "in the midst of the dwelling places" or "in the midst of the waters."

The only good evidence for pastyā "waters" is a Yajurvedic verse, MS II 6.8 (68: 16f.) = TS I 8.12.1-2 = VS X 7, in which pastyā undoubtedly does refer to the waters (cf. Pischel VSt. II: 213f.). This verse, however, does not establish the meaning of the word for the RV. It is the only original verse in the YV in which pastyā occurs as a common noun. All other occurrences are repetitions of R̥gvedic verses. The word, therefore, was probably not part of the living vocabulary of the YV. Because the poet wanted a R̥gvedic-sounding verse, he used an archaic, R̥gvedic word. But since pastyā was no longer part of his vocabulary, he misunderstood the R̥gvedic verses which provided his model (e.g. RV I 25.10). He thought pastyā meant "waters," not only because this interpretation can fit, but also because for him, as for the young Veda generally, Varuṇa is the god of the waters.

⁴⁶Also, Mitra and Varuṇa together perform cosmogonic and cosmological acts in accordance with their commandment, cf. V 63.7, 69.1, 4.

When he alone is invoked, Varuṇa still performs the more positive functions. He is a leader of men (II 28.3) and he can be summoned as a protector (II 28.3, 10; VIII 42.2, 3). He organizes the peoples (V 48.5; VII 85.3). The emphasis, however, falls on Varuṇa as a judge and potential punisher. He watches over the actions of men (I 25.11, 50.6; VI 68.3), sometimes by means of spies (I 25.13; VII 87.3). His anger is kindled at offenses he thus perceives (I 24.11; VII 84.2, 89.5). Many appeals to him, therefore, are for mercy (I 25.5, 19; VII 89.1). He is asked to release the fetters that bind the offender (I 25.21; VII 88.7 cf. X 85.25; AV I 10.3) or simply to free men from their transgressions (I 24.9, 14; V 85.7-8). He is beseeched not to exact the punishment that a fault would normally require (VII 87.7, 88.6, 89.5). Because he has the power to punish or forgive offense, he is invoked as the possessor of many remedies, as in I 24.9 śatām te rājan bhiṣājāḥ sahasram, urvī gabhīrā sumatiḥ te astu, bādhasva dūre nīrtim parācāḥ, kṛtām cid énaḥ prā mumugdhy asmāt "Yours, o king (Varuṇa), are a hundred, a thousand remedies. Wide and deep be your benevolence. Press destruction far into the distance. Free from us any offense which has been committed." In this respect, the god is similar to Rudra, who is feared as a bringer of disease and destruction (cf. Macdonell 1897: 74ff.). Yet, because he brings disaster, he can also save from harm (e.g. I 114.4; II 33.7; V 51.13). Because he brings disease, he also has the remedies to cure disease (cf. II 33.12; V 42.11; VII 46.3).

Nevertheless, this emphasis on Varuṇa's ability to punish and to forgive does not mean that Varuṇa is a "severe" sovereign, as opposed to Mitra, who represents kingship in a less threatening aspect.⁴⁷ If Varuṇa

⁴⁷E.g. Bergaigne 1878-83 III: 115. Cf. Dumézil 1976: 28ff.

appears to be a more fearful figure than Mitra, this can be explained by the difference between the two principles which are their special domains. In the case of an alliance, there is an exchange of obligations. A commandment, however, defines a relationship in which one person places an obligation on another. The ruler has power over his subject and can use that power against him if he is disobedient. Since a commandment is by its nature more threatening than an alliance, the god of commandments is reasonably more dangerous than the god of alliances. Thus, even more than Mitra and Aryaman, Varuṇa is the divine counterpart of the king, for he represents not just a principle through which society is ordered and which the king has the duty to protect, but that specific principle which is most closely associated with kingship itself, the principle of sovereign authority.

Indeed, it is as a divine representative of the king that Varuṇa assumes several of his distinctive attributes. His "spies" (spáśah) are the immortal counterparts of the king's spy network through which he watched over his people.⁴⁸ Very possibly the "fettters" of Varuṇa have an earthly origin as well. According to late Vedic texts, wrong-doers were punished by bondage,⁴⁹ and there is at least one passage that shows that this was true for the time of the RV as well:

VII 86.5 áva drugdhāni pítiryā srjā nó
 'va yā vayam cakrmā tanūbhiḥ
 áva rājan paśutīpaṃ ná tāyūm
 srjā vatsām ná dāmno vásiṣṭham

⁴⁸Cf. Lüders 1917: 462f. and Foy 1895: 83. Lommel (1953: 323ff.) unconvincingly interpreted the spies of Varuṇa as the stars.

⁴⁹Cf. TS VII 5.9.2; ŚB II 2.2.8; Kauṣ U. III 3 cited in Rau 1957: 99f.

Release from us the deceptions of our fathers (and those) which we ourselves have done. O king, release Vasiṣṭha (who is bound) like a cattle-stealing thief. Release him like a calf from its rope.⁵⁰

The god Varuṇa is summoned as the king who can release Vasiṣṭha because he ordains punishment for those who violate his commandments. Varuṇa's fetters, of course, are not of rope⁵¹ but rather of disease and distress.⁵² Ropes which actually bound criminals, however, are the source of the image of Varuṇa's fetters.

Just as Varuṇa rules the natural world by his commandment, in exactly that way, he rules the world of men. Thus, Varuṇa, together with Mitra, regulates and organizes men through the authority of his commandment:

VIII 25.17 ānu pūrvāṇy okyā
 sāmraṇyasya saścima
 mitrasya vratā varuṇasya dīrghaśrūt

I Dīrghaśrūt have followed the ancient, traditional commandments of (Varuṇa) of universal sovereignty, the commandments of Mitra and Varuṇa.

V 66.2 tā hí kṣatram ávihrutam
 samyag asuryam āśāte
 ádha vratéva mānuṣam
 svār ná dhāyi darśatām

For the two (Mitra and Varuṇa) together have attained unswerving and lordly rule. As if by (the same) commandment, mankind has been (properly) placed, like the beautiful sun (in heaven).

The latter verse intends more than that man, like nature, is ordered.

It also suggests that the commandment which has put the sun in heaven issues from the same divine authority which organizes human relationships.

⁵⁰Cf. Schlerath 1960a: 107.

⁵¹Cf. VII 84.2.

⁵²So Hillebrandt 1927-29 II:23.

By pointing to the gods' manifest powers over nature, the poet thus establishes the reality of their powers over men.⁵³

But the power of Varuṇa's commandment is shown in other ways as well. There is protection and prosperity through the commandment of Varuṇa, as in II 28.2a táva vraté subhágāsaḥ syāma "May we be of good fortune under your authority, (Varuṇa)" and I 136.5de tám aryamābhī rakṣaty, rjūyāntam ānu vratām "Aryaman guards him who acts honestly with regard to the commandment (of Mitra and Varuṇa)." So also are V 72.2a vraténa stho dhruvākṣemā "You two, (Mitra and Varuṇa), are those who give enduring peace through your commandment" and V 67.3cd vratā padéva saścire, pānti mártyaṃ riṣāḥ, "(Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman) pursue their commandments like tracks. They protect the mortal from injury." The intention of all these verses is the same. Where the commandment of Varuṇa and the Ādityas is honored, there people live together in peace and security.

Conversely, there must be no disobedience of Varuṇa's commandments. As the god himself says in AV V 11.3cd ná me dāsó nāryo mahitvá, vratām mīmāya yád ahám dharisyé "By reason of my greatness, neither dāsa nor ārya has violated that commandment of mine, which I shall uphold." And the same point is stressed in RV III 54.18b ādabdhāni varuṇasya vratāni "Undeceivable are the commandments of Varuṇa." Compare VII 66.6b in which the commandment of Varuṇa is also called "undeceivable" and II 28.8d where his commandments are described as "immovable" (āpracyuta). If men try to violate these injunctions, then certain punishment follows. The opening verses of I 25 declare:

⁵³ See below, pp. 284-287.

I 25.1 yác cid dhí te víso yathā
prá deva varuṇa vratām
minīmāsi dyávi-dyavi

Even if as (other) communities, o god, Varuṇa, we violate your commandments on any day,

I 25.2ab mā no vadhāya hatnáve
jihlānāsyā rīradhaḥ

Do not subject us to your mortal blow, being angry (about this).

The vengeance of Varuṇa comes upon those who violate his ordinances:

IX 73.8cd vidvān sá víśvā bhūvanābhī paśyaty, ávājūṣṭān vidhyati ... avratān "(Varuṇa),⁵⁴ knowing, looks upon all creatures. He pierces those displeasing ones who do not follow his commandment."

Thus, the first two of Varuṇa's functions support the theory that he is the god of commandments (vratā). As lord of the cosmos, Varuṇa creates and maintains the structure of the world, and, appropriately for the god of commandments, he accomplishes all this through his commandment (vratā). As lord of men, he is a king, who watches over his people and makes certain they obey his authority. Because he is a power which demands obedience and threatens punishment if he does not get it, Varuṇa sometimes appears to be dangerous, ominous. He possesses this menacing aspect because he represents the principle of authority and its demand for obedience. Again, this rule over men is maintained through the commandment (vratā) of the god of commandments.

⁵⁴ Or Soma identified as Varuṇa.

Varuṇa: Lord of the Waters

The third attribute of Varuṇa is the most problematic: his rule over the waters. In epic and classical Sanskrit literature, Varuṇa becomes the god of the waters, an "Indian Neptune," as Lüders (1951-59 I: 9) calls him.⁵⁵ For the Brāhmaṇas and later Saṃhitās, including the AV (cf. Renou 1960: 303ff.), Varuṇa as the spirit of the waters is one of the two principal images of the god. According to Lüders (1951-59 I: 9ff, 50ff.), this close relationship between Varuṇa and the waters existed also in the RV. There too, he says, Varuṇa dwells in the waters, which constitute his special realm.⁵⁶ In my view, Lüders has misinterpreted the relationship between Varuṇa and the waters and so distorted the character of Varuṇa. Therefore, two tasks lie ahead: to define the nature of Varuṇa's relationship to the waters and to account for it in terms of his central character as the god of commandments.

Before examining the R̥gvedic passages which describe this relationship, we must first find the proper perspective through which to evaluate them. What do the waters mean for the Āryan Indian? From all indications, the climate of the Northwest part of the Indian subcontinent was essentially the same for the Āryas as it is now (cf. Zimmer 1879: 40). Above all, therefore, the life of the Āryas was dependent on the regular arrival of an adequate monsoon from the Southwest. During the hot season, both man and nature yearn for rain (cf. VII 103.2, 3). They look forward anxiously

⁵⁵ Cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 41ff.

⁵⁶ Lüders (p. 10) notes that according to many passages in the RV, Varuṇa dwells in heaven. He reconciles the two views by asserting that the RV knows a "heavenly ocean." For a just criticism of this view, see Hoffmann 1954.

for the rains to swell the rivers and send them rushing toward the sea (cf. V 83.8), though they are aware that an over-abundance of rain is also dangerous (cf. V 83.10). While the other natural events necessary for sustaining life, such as the coming of dawn and the rising of the sun, could be affected by the displeasure of the gods or ritual failure, the rains were irregular and therefore especially concerned these people.

The importance of the rains and the waters for life is reflected in the central role which they play in the myths of the Vedic religion. In terms of the number of hymns dedicated to them, for example, the three major gods of the RV are Indra, Agni, and Soma--and all three are intimately involved in bringing the waters. Thus, the principal myth of Indra is the slaying of Vṛtra, which leads to the release of the waters. Through this deed, the waters became available to men, or more especially to Āryan man (cf. I 32.8), so that life could exist.

The relationship between Agni and the waters is more complex. He is born from the waters (III 1.6) and his dwelling place is said to be among the waters (III 3.5). He is sometimes identified as Apām Napāt "the offspring of the waters" (e.g. III 9.1). This association of fire and water is especially significant, for the transformations and interworkings of fire and water are the basis for the cycle which makes life possible. The fire sends aloft the waters, which descend again as rain:

I 164.51 samānām etād udakām
 úc cáity áva cáhabhiḥ
 bhūmim parjānyā jínvanti
 dívaṃ jinvanty agnáyaḥ

This very same water ascends and descends throughout the days. The rains enliven the land; the fires enliven heaven.

This verse overlays the natural interchange of fire and water--each "consumes"

the other--with the mutual exchange between gods and men, which is the basis of the Vedic sacrifice.

Finally, Soma too brings the waters. In IX 74.3, the poet invokes Soma "who is master of the rain" (íse yó vr̥ṣtér) and the "leader of the waters" (apām netā). The soma-drops passing through the woolen filter appear like drops of rain (e.g. IX 63.27) and thus betoken the coming of the rain.

Given this prominence of the waters, Varuṇa's close relationship with them is no longer incongruous. If Varuṇa truly is lord of the cosmos, the guardian of truth, and the leader and protector of men, then control over the waters would have to be one of his major responsibilities.⁵⁷

A second point is that Varuṇa usually shares lordship over the waters with Mitra. Indeed, the rule of these gods over the waters is one of the major themes of the hymns addressed to them. Five of the hymns to Mitra and Varuṇa--I 152; V 62, 63, 68, and VII 64--are primarily pleas to them to send the life-giving waters. Of these, V 63 shows most clearly the nature and meaning of their control over the waters:

V 63.1 ítasya gopāv ádhi tiṣṭhatho rátham
sátyadharmānā paramé vyòmani
yám átra mitrávaruṇāvatho yuvám
tásmāi vr̥ṣtír mādhumat pínvate diváh

You, o protectors of the truth, whose institutes are real, stand upon your chariot in the farthest heaven. Whom you two help here (on earth), Mitra and Varuṇa, for him the rain swells rich in honey from heaven.

V 63.2 samrājāv asyá bhúvanasya rājatho
mítrāvaruṇā vidáthe swardṛśā
vr̥ṣtīm vām rádho amṛtatvám ímahe

⁵⁷If the waters, which are goddesses themselves, or Parjanya, the god of thunderstorms, are not more prominent in the RV, it is because these elements are under the control of powers like Varuṇa.

dyāvāpr̥thiví ví caranti tanyávaḥ

As universal kings, you rule over this creation, o Mitra and Varuṇa. At the ceremony, we beseech you, appearing as the sun, for rain, for your care, and for deathlessness. Thunders range about heaven and earth.

V 63.3 samrājā ugrā vr̥ṣabhā divás pátī
pr̥thivyā mitrávaruṇa vícarṣaṇī
citrébhīr abhráir úpa tiṣṭhatho rávaḥ
dyām varṣayatho ásurasya māyāyā

You two universal kings, fierce bulls, lords of heaven and earth, o Mitra and Varuṇa, who keep the peoples apart, with bright clouds approach our call. You two cause the heaven to rain through the power of a lord.

V 63.4 māyā vām mitrávaruṇā diví śritā
sūryo jyótiś carati citrām áyudham
tám abhreṇa vr̥ṣtyā gūhatho diví
párjanya drapsā mādhumanta írate

Your power, Mitra and Varuṇa, is reposed in heaven. The sun, the light, wanders (as your) bright weapon. You hide it in heaven by cloud and rain. O Parjanya, honey-sweet drops are arising.

V 63.5 rátham yuñjate marútaḥ súbhe sukham
śúro ná mitrávaruṇā gáviṣṭiṣu
rājāmsi citrá ví caranti tanyávo
diváh samrājā páyasā na ukṣatam

The Maruts yoke up the swift-axeled chariot for glory, like a hero on quests for cows, o Mitra and Varuṇa. The thunders range over the bright spaces. O you universal kings, sprinkle us with milk from heaven.

V 63.6 vācam sú mitrávaruṇāv írāvatīm
parjanyaś citrām vadati tvíṣimatīm
abhrá vasata marútaḥ sú māyāyā
dyām varṣayatam aruṇām arepásam

O Mitra and Varuṇa, Parjanya speaks his refreshment-bearing, bright, mighty speech. The Maruts clothe themselves in clouds through (your) power. Do you two make the ruddy, spotless heaven to rain.

V 63.7

dhármanā mitrāvaruṇā vipāścītā
vrataḥ rakṣethe ásurasya māyāyā
ṛtēna víśvam bhúvanam ví rājathah
sūryam ā dhattho diví citryam rátham

Through your institute, o Mitra and Varuṇa, who perceive (this) inspired hymn, you guard your commandments through the power of a lord. Through truth, you rule over the whole creation (and) set the sun in heaven (as) a bright chariot.

This hymn is typical in portraying Mitra and Varuṇa's control over the rain as part of their rule over the whole cosmos.⁵⁸ Because they rule the sun (vss. 2, 4, 7), heaven and earth (vs. 3), and the whole creation (vss. 2, 7), they can also send the rains and prosper their domain. As those who rule the world, they are "universal kings" (vss. 2, 3, 5), who exercise the "power of a lord" (vss. 3, 4, 6, 7). Their māyā has no negative connotations. It is the mysterious power which belongs to them as lords, who invisibly work their will over everything. There are no outward signs of their authority, but its effects reveal its reality. Finally, Mitra and Varuṇa are lords of the world because they protect the truth (ṛtā, vs. 1),⁵⁹ establish the institutes (dhárman, vss. 1, 7), and enforce the commandments (vrataḥ, vs. 7), through which the world is governed. The first and last verses establish the context of their universal authority: it is grounded in the principles of organization and structure, which they represent.

⁵⁸ Similarly, the poet of I 152 depicts Mitra and Varuṇa as lords of the dawns (cf. vss. 3, 4) and the rising sun (vss. 3, 4, 5) in his plea for rain (cf. vs. 7). In V 62.3, through their "greatness" (māhobhiḥ), the extent of their power, they sustain heaven, earth, and all life through sending the rain.

⁵⁹ So also, in VII 64.2, Mitra and Varuṇa are called the "protectors of great truth," the truth which governs the world, and hence as the lords of the rains and the rivers.

Their lordship over the world gives Mitra and Varuṇa the authority and responsibility to bring the waters, but the way they use that power depends on the actions of men. Because Mitra and Varuṇa are the guardians of the truth (ṛtā), they give rain to those who uphold the truth in their actions and words. This principle is implied in V 63, especially in its final verse. There the poet calls on Mitra and Varuṇa to take notice of his hymn, which proclaims their power, and to honor his recognition of the truth of their authority by using that power for his benefit. A clearer example is I 79.3, in which Mitra and Varuṇa, here along with Aryaman, respond to the truth which a well-performed sacrifice expresses:

I 79.3 yád īm ṛtasya páyasā pívāno
náyann ṛtasya pathíbhiḥ rájiṣṭhaiḥ
aryamā mitró varuṇah párijmā
tvácam pr̥cānty úparasya yónau

When they⁶⁰ have led him [= Agni] -- (he who is) swelling through the drink of truth--along the straightest paths of the truth, (then) Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa, the universal one, wet the skin (of the earth, which is) in the lap of the lower (realm).

If the priests, through their rightly conducted ceremony, send Agni to the gods, then the gods will honor the truth of that act by fulfilling their own commitment to prosper men.

Rain is the response of Mitra and Varuṇa to the truth also in I 152.

According to the hymn, Mitra and Varuṇa recognize its truth and answer that truth with rain. The poet begins by invoking the gods as the masters of the rain and of the distinction between truth and falsehood:

⁶⁰ The subject of lines ab is probably the priests (otherwise, Geldner RVÜ I: 101; Renou EVP XXI: 23). A similar idea appears in I 128.2abc tām yajña-sādhām āpi vātáyāmasy, ṛtasya pathā nāmasā haviṣmatā, devātātā haviṣmatā "We inspire him, who leads the worship to success (to move) along the path of truth through our homage accompanied by oblations (and to be) among the gods through (our homage) accompanied by oblations."

I 152.1 yuvām vástrāṇi pīvasā vasāthe
yuvór áchidrā mántavo ha sárgāh
ávātiratam áṇṛtāni víśva
ṛténa mitrávaruṇā sacethe

You two clothe yourselves in fatty clothes. Your faultless judgements (are) the discharges (of rain): you two have overcome all untruths; you are accompanied by the truth, o Mitra and Varuṇa.

The "fatty clothes" of Mitra and Varuṇa are the rains themselves (cf. Geldner RVÜ I: 210). The principle according to which they regulate the rains is then stated in the following lines: the distribution of the rains is a direct reflection of their adherence to the truth and their opposition to untruth. The poet then announces that he himself also knows the truth and is expressing it in his hymn: I 152.2b satyó mántraḥ kaviśastāh "True (is) the formula which is proclaimed by the poet." The substance of this truth is that Mitra and Varuṇa are lords over the dawns and the sun (vss. 3-5) and that they rule them in accordance with the institutes they set forth (vss. 4, 5). Essentially, therefore, the poet's truth is the recognition of the authority of Mitra and Varuṇa and hence of the principles they represent. Since he acknowledges and proclaims their authority, the poet asserts that his formulation (bráhmaṇ) itself ought to be powerful and that the rains ought to be his (vs. 7).

The emphasis on Mitra and Varuṇa's kingship in these rain hymns (e.g. V 62.3, 63.2, 3, 5, 68.2, 85.3; VII 64.2) has special significance. As Schlerath (1960a: 148ff.) has rightly shown, for the RV, as for later texts, the king was responsible for the continued prosperity of his rule. If the king

⁶¹ Cf. Rau 1957: 90ff.; Gonda 1966: 7f., 29; and Lüders 1897: 87ff. The responsibility of the king to maintain the fertility of his kingdom was probably an Indo-European concept, cf. Benveniste 1969 II: 26.

failed to rule faithfully and properly, the gods would take offense and send a drought. The king, therefore, had to perform all the duties and rites necessary to ensure that the rain would not be withheld. Since Mitra and Varuṇa are the kings over the whole world, they are responsible for ensuring the fertility of the whole world. Their authority can only prove itself by their power to bring the waters.

This idea is implied in several verses which describe the sovereignty of the two gods as founded on their ability to provide rain. An example is V 62.6 and 7:

V 62.6cd rājānā kṣatráṁ áhrṇīyamānā
sahásrasthūṇam bibhṛthaḥ sahá dváu

You two kings, being without anger, together bear a thousand-pillared rule.

V 62.7 híraṇyanirṇig áyo asya sthūṇā
ví bhrājate divy áśvājanīva
bhadré kṣétre nímitā tílville vā
sanéma mádhvo ádhigartyasya

Gold-leaved iron is the pillar of this (rule). Like a horse-whip, it radiates in heaven, firmly implanted in auspicious or fruitful rule. We would win of the honey of (your) over-throne.

The rule of Mitra and Varuṇa is based on the prosperity of their dominion, for it is founded in an "auspicious or fruitful rule." The symbol of that rule is their throne, from which comes the rain, the "honey," which is the source of all prosperity.⁶²

In summary, Mitra and Varuṇa control the waters because they send the rains. This function is an integral part of the total character of these gods, for it is one aspect of their more general rule over the world and a consequence

⁶² Cf. V 68.5, according to which Mitra and Varuṇa ascend their throne because they bring the rain and fill the river beds.

of their guardianship of the truth. Further, like human kings, Mitra and Varuṇa possess lordship because they can prosper their dominion through the rains.

But in many other passages, Varuṇa alone, no longer in the company of Mitra, rules or dwells among the waters. Commonly, Varuṇa governs the waters because he rules the world. This was also true for Mitra and Varuṇa, but in this case, the waters spoken about are often the rivers. The clearest example is II 28.4:

II 28.4 prā sīm ādityó asrjad vidhartān
 rtām síndhavo váruṇasya yanti
 ná śrāmyanti ná ví mucanty eté
 váyo ná paptū raghuyā párijman

The Āditya, (as) ordainer, has sent these forth. The rivers go to [i.e. are obedient to] the truth of Varuṇa. They tire not, nor do they rest. Like birds, they fly swiftly on their course.

The rivers here are the earthly streams racing toward the ocean under the direction of Varuṇa.⁶³ Elsewhere in this hymn, the poet praises Varuṇa's power (vss. 1, 6, 8), submits to his authority (vss. 2, 3), and so begs his protection from his enemies and his own faults (vss. 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 10). In this context, the poet must intend the release of the waters to be part of the prosperity which he hopes his obedience to the authority of Varuṇa will bring.

In X 65.8, however, the waters over which Varuṇa rules are the rains:

X 65.8 parikṣitā pitārā pūrvajāvarī
 rtāsya yonā kṣayataḥ sāmokasā

⁶³They are not heavenly rivers, as Lüders (1951-59 I: 146f.) maintained. Cf. Hoffmann 1954: sp. 393. Similar also is X 75.2.

dyāvāprthivī váruṇāya sávrata

ghṛtāvat páyo mahiṣāya pinvataḥ

The two ancient-born parents, who dwell (all) around, will dwell in the lap of truth, sharing the same home. Heaven and Earth, under the same authority, will swell the ghee-rich milk for Varuṇa, the buffalo.

In that Heaven and Earth adhere to truth and especially in that they adhere to the same commandments--those of Varuṇa--, they send the "ghee-rich milk," the rain waters. They do this "for Varuṇa" because Varuṇa is the lord over the principles of truth and authority.

In other passages, Varuṇa's lordship over the waters is founded on his authority over humanity:

VII 49.3 yāsām rājā váruṇo yāti mādhye
 satyānrté avapásyañ jánānām
 madhuścútaḥ śúcayo yāḥ pāvakās
 tā āpo devír ihá mām avantu

In whose midst king Varuṇa drives, surveying the truth and the untruth of the peoples, let these divine waters, which are bright and pure and dripping honey, help me now.

The whole hymn is a prayer for the different kinds of water which are necessary for life. Thus, in vs. 2, the poet summons the waters which flow (yāḥ srāvanti), those which are found by digging (khanítrimāḥ), those which bubble up by themselves (svayaṃjāḥ), etc. The waters mentioned in vs. 3 are the rains, but surprising, at first glance, is Varuṇa's activity among them: he is "surveying the truth and untruth of the peoples." Though this would seem to have nothing to do with the rains, it actually does, for the poet implies that Varuṇa will bring the waters to those in whom he sees truth, but will withhold it from those who are untrue to divine commandments.

Much the same idea may be at the basis of II 38.8:

II 38.3 yādrādhyaṃ varuṇo yónim ápyam
ániśitaṃ nimíṣi jārthurāṇaḥ
vísvo mārtaṇḍo vrajám ā pásúr gāt
sthasó jānmāni savitā vy ākaḥ

Insofar as (the world) is cared for (by Savitar), Varuṇa goes to his watery home, ceaselessly attentive, (even) to a wink. Every human has gone (to his home), (every) animal to its pen. Savitar has divided the races (of creatures) according to their proper place.⁶⁴

This verse is filled with difficulties both of translation and interpretation. First, the root bhur does not mean "move back and forth" (cf. Geldner RVÜ I: 326) or the like, but rather characterizes the subject as quick, either physically or mentally. Compare IV 27.3cd srjád yád asmā áva
ha kṣipáj jyām, kṛśānur ástā manasā bhuranyān "And the archer Kṛśānu, being mentally alert, released the bow-string when he shot down at him [= the falcon]."⁶⁵ In II 38.8, as in IV 27.3, it is probably mental awareness or activity which the poet expresses with this verb. This interpretation of bhur explains the locative nimíṣi. This word is used in connection with Varuṇa in II 28.6 and AV IV 16.5. In both instances, the god is described as the over-seer of men, who misses nothing. The AV passage is especially germane: AV IV 16.5c sāṃkhyātā asya nimíṣo jānānām "The winkings of men are reckoned by him." In my translation of II 38.8b, I understand the line as having essentially the same meaning; namely, that Varuṇa is always on the alert and so notices even a wink.

The third problem is the phrase yóni ápyam. It does not mean simply that Varuṇa's home is the waters; it rather means that he lives among the

⁶⁴For the translation of lines cd, see below p. 245.

⁶⁵For the context of this verse, see Schneider 1971: 17.

waters and so controls or distributes them. It is similar to ghrtáyoni, "whose home is amid the ghee," which describes Mitra and Varuṇa in V 68.2. Note also the double significance of yónim ápyam: the phrase could mean not only "watery home" (of Varuṇa), but also "home of the waters." This home is the ocean, for it is to the ocean that the rivers run, as in III 33.3d samānám yónim ánu samcárantī "(the two rivers), which move together to the same home..."⁶⁶ and III 1.6cd sánā átra yuvatáyah sáyoniṛ,
ékaṃ gārbhaṃ dadhire saptá vāñih "Here the ancient young girls [the waters], who share the same home, the seven singing voices, have conceived a single child."⁶⁷ In the latter verse, the seven vāñih are the seven rivers of northern India, among which Agni, their "single child," is conceived.⁶⁸ The ocean is their yóni, not only because it is their common goal, but also because it is their source, for it is from the ocean that the waters rise to heaven to descend again.⁶⁹ If the yónim ápyam to which Varuṇa goes is the ocean, this term characterizes the ocean as the source of rain and implies Varuṇa's control of the cycle of waters to heaven and back to earth.

The verse thus suggests more than that Varuṇa as a god of the waters is sent to his home by Savitar. Varuṇa watches over human affairs from his watery home, and therefore the authority of Varuṇa over men will be felt in the way the waters act. This theme is introduced because, in the preceding verse, the poet describes how Savitar assigns to different creatures their particular habitats and states that this distribution is

⁶⁶Cf. Kwellla 1973: 27ff.

⁶⁷Also, AV X 5.23.

⁶⁸Otherwise, Lüders 1951-59 I: 154ff.

⁶⁹Hoffmann 1954: sp 391.

according to the "commandments" (vratá) of Savitar. The reference to Varuṇa continues the idea that Savitar gives all beings their proper place, but it also underlines the authority of Savitar's commandment by describing the activity of the god who protects divine commandments.

Finally, control over the rains characterizes the kingship of Varuṇa as much as it does the joint rule of Mitra and Varuṇa. The best example is V 85.3-4:

V 85.3 nīcīnabāraṃ vāruṇaḥ kāvandham
prá sasarja ródasī antárikṣam
téna víśvasya bhúvanasya rájā
yávaṃ ná vṛṣṭír vy ùnatti bhúma

Varuṇa has emptied the bucket, whose opening is below, over the two worlds and the space between. By this (is he) king of the whole creation. Like rain the barley, he wets the ground.

V 85.4 unátti bhūmim pṛthivīm utá dyām
yadā dugdhāṃ vāruṇo váṣṭy ād ít
sám abhréṇa vasata párvatāsas
taviṣṭyántaḥ śrathayanta vírāḥ

He wets the ground, the earth. And when Varuṇa wishes heaven milked, then (it is). The mountains clothe themselves in cloud (and) the heroes [= the Maruts], showing their strength, loosen it.

These verses not only portray Varuṇa as the lord of the natural world but show, especially in vs. 3, that this rule is founded on the ability to bring the rain.

The themes of Varuṇa's lordship over the waters as a consequence of his lordship over the world and as the foundation of his rule both occur also in VII 34:

VII 34.10 á caṣṭa āsām pātho nadínām
vāruṇa ugrāḥ sahásracakṣāḥ

The mighty Varuṇa of a thousand eyes watches over the fold⁷⁰ of these rivers.

VII 34.11 rājā rāṣṭrānām péso nadínām
ánuttam asmai kṣatrām víśvāyu

He is the king of (all) kingdoms (and) the ornament of rivers. It has been conceded to him that his rule (will be) eternal.

In vs. 10, the rivers are described as a herd which Varuṇa guards and controls. Because he is the master of the rivers, he is the "ornament of the rivers" in vs. 11, just as Soma is called the "ornament of the ceremony" (adhvarásya péśaḥ) in VII 42.1 because he is the very center and focus of the ritual. It is due to this lordship over the rivers that Varuṇa is acknowledged to be a king forever, for the king is he who has power over the waters.

The passages thus far considered, therefore, imply that Varuṇa governs the waters because of his central character as divine king and ruler over man and nature. They do not differ substantially from those describing the joint rule of Mitra and Varuṇa over the waters, except that the latter passages stress the gods' lordship over the rain. The reason for this difference lies less in a distinction between the joint rule of Mitra and Varuṇa and that of Varuṇa alone than in the expressions of different poets. Most of the rain hymns come from the Vth maṇḍala, whose poets praise Mitra and Varuṇa together. In the one passage from this book which describes Varuṇa alone as master of the waters, V 85.3f., these waters are the rains. Other poets, like the Vasiṣṭhas for example, more often speak of the lordship of Varuṇa alone over the waters in general. This latter view is also more logical, for Varuṇa, the god of commandments,

⁷⁰ Cf. Schmidt 1973: 23.

the divine apotheosis of kingly authority, is more reasonably the lord of waters than Mitra, the god of alliances; and he should be lord of the waters and not simply the rains, since all waters are necessary for life.

In other R̥gvedic passages, however, Varuṇa's connection with the waters appears to be independent of his kingship over men or his rule over nature. Such verses form the basis of Lüders' view of Varuṇa as a water god, and so merit careful attention. Few lend themselves to easy interpretation, and there is some evidence that Varuṇa's connection with the waters assumes greater significance in the later RV. But the verses Lüders cites do not prove that Varuṇa's special realm is the waters.

In some cases, Varuṇa does not really have much of any relationship with the waters. For example, Lüders cites VII 88.3f.:

VII 88.3 ā yād ruhāva varuṇas ca nāvam
 prā yāt samudrām irāyāva mādhyam
 ādhi yād apām snubhiś carāva
 prā preṅkhā īṅkhayāvahai śubhé kām

When we, Varuṇa (and I), boarded the ship, when we sailed up to the middle of the ocean, when we moved along the backs of the waters, (then) were we going to swing on the swing for (our) glory.

VII 88.4 vāsiṣṭham ha varuṇo nāvy ādhād
 ṛṣim cakāra svāpā mādhyam
 stotāram viprah sudinatvé āhnām
 yān nū dyāvas tatānan yād usāsah

Varuṇa placed Vasiṣṭha in a ship. (Varuṇa), the master-worker, made him a seer through his great powers. Inspired, he (made him his) praiser on (that) lucky day of days, for so long as day-times, so long as dawns, will endure.

Lüders (1951-59 I: 320f.) interprets the swing and the ship as the sun, which Varuṇa and Vasiṣṭha ride through the heavenly ocean. Surely the

swing is the sun (cf. VII 87.5), but the ship and the waters are also metaphors. The verses depict Vasiṣṭha's initiation as a ṛṣi, which, as Geldner (RVÜ II: 260) quite correctly notes, comes about when the seer wins a vision of the truth. The poet here depicts this inner journey as an ascent by ship to the sun, which is the symbol of the truth, over the ocean of space which lies between the earth and the sun. Varuṇa accompanies Vasiṣṭha, not primarily because of his connection with the waters, but because he himself is an inspired (vīpra) knower of the truth and a master (svāpah) poet, who therefore has the powers (māhāmsi) to make Vasiṣṭha a seer.

Another verse cited by Lüders (1951-59 I: 52) presents a rather complicated case:

I 184.3cd vacyānte vām kakuhā apsú jātā
 yugā jūrṇeva varuṇasya bhūreḥ

Lüders' translation of this verse is: "In Sprüngen (ihr Ásvins) gehn eure Spitzentiere, die in den Wassern geborenen, dahin wie die morschen Joche des grossen Varuṇa." He acknowledges that the verse is very unclear and only tentatively endorses Oldenberg's suggestion that the yugā jūrṇā of Varuṇa are the waves of the sea. In his review of Lüders' work, Thieme (1951: 411 n.2) tries to make a stronger case for a connection between Varuṇa and the waters.⁷¹ His translation of the verse is "In Sprüngen gehn eure (der Ásvin) Spitzentiere, die in den Wassern des vielfachen (reichen ?) Varuṇa (d.h. im himmlischen Meere) geborenen,

⁷¹

He interprets yugā as similar in meaning to yójana, that is, not only a "team (of horses)" but also the distance which one team can travel.

über die gleichsam gealterten (d.h. von Rissen durchfurchten und deshalb unwegsamen) Joche (d.h. Wegstrecken von der Länge je eines Vorspannes ...)."

Unlike Lüders, therefore, he saw yugā jūrṇā, like jūrṇā viṣṭāp in I 46.3, as referring to the rough land. Since there is no reason such land should belong to Varuṇa, he argues that varuṇasya should be construed with apsū.

Both interpretations are strained. Lüders' (or really Oldenberg's) view of yugā jūrṇā is a guess, and Thieme's translation both relies on a sense of yugā which is otherwise unattested and twists the normal word order. The real problem is not yugā jūrṇā but the verb vacyānte. The root vañc properly means "bend" or "go crookedly." When used of horses, it refers not to their running or leaping, but to their bodies, which at full gallop are bent like a bow. Letting the words carry their common significance, I translate: "Your lead horses, born amid the waters, are bent like the worn yokes of abundant Varuṇa." The horses bend as they run, like old yokes which are crooked with age.

However, the poet compares the horses not to any yokes, but rather to the oldest yokes of all, the yokes of the ancient authority of Varuṇa. These yokes are metaphors for his long-standing rule, which, as the adjective bhūri "ample, opulent" signals, brings everything under his ownership and control.⁷² The image of Varuṇa as the great lord of the whole creation thematically parallels and thereby accents the vast distances covered by the Āśvins. Thus understood, this verse implies no connection between Varuṇa and the waters.

In VII 87.6, Varuṇa's connection with the waters is almost accidental. The passage is actually concerned with his kingship:

⁷²Cf. II 28.1 idāṃ kavér ādityāsya svarājāḥ ... abhy āstu ... āti yó mandró yajāthāya devāḥ, sukīrtīm bhikṣe varuṇasya bhūreḥ "Let this (hymn) to the poet, the Āditya, the king over his own, be superior. (He is) superior, the god who is eloquent for worship. I beg good renown of Varuṇa, the ample."

áva sīndhum varuṇo dyāur iva sthād

drapsó ná śvetó mṛgás túviṣmān

gambhīrāśaṃso rájaso vimānaḥ

supārākṣatraḥ sató asyá rájā

Varuṇa has descended to the (border-)river (of the world) like the heaven (to the horizon), like the white drop [= the setting moon], (like) a strong wild animal (to a watering place) -- he whose pronouncements are deep, a traverser of space, whose dominion is easily crossed (by him), the king of this existent (world).

This translation follows that of Thieme (1970b: 449), who argues that the sīndhu is the sea which forms the border of the world. It is as lord of the world that Varuṇa touches its border, as the second half of the verse makes plain. He is not the lord of the sīndhavaḥ, as Lüders (1951-59 I: 51) maintains.⁷³

However, there is a genuine connection between Varuṇa and the waters in the passages in which Soma is called Varuṇa. These verses apparently support Lüders' thesis, for Soma becomes Varuṇa only when he is mixed with water. The poets repeatedly say that Soma entering the waters is Varuṇa entering the ocean. Surely, Varuṇa must be the god of the ocean, the god who dwells in the waters.

When we turn to the passages themselves, however, the problem appears more complex. First, the common connection of Soma and Varuṇa with the waters is not the only basis for their identification. Cf. IX 73.3f.:

pavītravantaḥ pári vācam āsate

pitāiṣāṃ pratnó abhí rakṣati vratám

mahāḥ samudrāṃ varuṇas tiró dadhe

dhīrā íc chekur dharuṇeṣv ārabham

⁷³Lüders (1951-59 I: 52) also cites V 3.1, in which Agni is addressed as Varuṇa. The reason, he argues, is that Agni and Varuṇa both dwell in waters. There is no evidence in this verse that this is the tertium comparationis.

Bearing the sieves, (the priests) encircle the speech; the ancient father of these (singers) guards the commandment. The great Varuṇa [= Soma] has hidden himself in the ocean: only the wise ones have been able to seize (him) among the foundations.

IX 73.4 sahāsradhāré 'va té sām asvaran
 divó nāke mādhujiḥvā asaścātaḥ
 āsyā spāśo ná ní miṣanti bhūrṇayah
 padé-pade pāśinaḥ santi sétavaḥ

In (the sieve) with a thousand streams, they have sounded together, (their voice reaching) the vault of heaven, they, the honey-tongued, inexhaustible. His attentive spies do not blink; at every step are (their) fettering traps.

The poet states the identification of Soma and Varuṇa in line 3c: when the soma enters the water, Soma is Varuṇa. Actually, however, this identification is made, though not stated, in line 3b. The "ancient father" who guards the commandments which rule the priestly words is already Soma acting as Varuṇa.

In vs. 4, the poet endows Soma with the full character of Varuṇa, for in 4cd, the spies of Varuṇa become the spies of Soma, who watch over the activities of men and punish those who offend the gods.⁷⁴ Thus, Soma is

Varuṇa not only because he enters the waters, but because he becomes the god of authority.

A second verse which identifies Soma and Varuṇa is much more obscure:

IX 95.4 tām marmṛjānām mahiṣām ná sánāv
 amśúm duhanty ukṣāṇam giriṣṭhām
 tām vāvasānām matāyaḥ sacante
 tritó bibharti vāruṇam samudré

⁷⁴ Cf. also the last verse of this hymn, IX 73.9abc rtāsya tāntur vītataḥ pavitra, ā jihvāyā agre vāruṇasya māyāyā, dhīrās cit tāt samīnakṣ-anta āśata "The thread of truth is stretched out on the sieve (and) on the tip of the tongue through the mysterious power of Varuṇa. Only the wise, who seek to attain that, have attained it." Here Varuṇa is introduced because he is the protector of the truth.

Him, licking himself clean on the ridge (of the filter), like a buffalo on the ridge (of a mountain), (this) stalk, a steer standing on a mountain, do they milk. Him, bellowing, do (our) thoughts accompany. Trita bears (this) Varuṇa in the ocean.

Trita here, as elsewhere in the IXth maṇḍala, is the name of an ancient soma-priest, which in this verse is given to the priest who now carries on the tradition of the soma-sacrifice. The soma, purified (vs. 4ab), is mixed with water and so is addressed as Varuṇa. The waters form the principal link between Soma and Varuṇa, but again perhaps not the only one. The reference to Trita, who is elsewhere connected to Varuṇa (cf. VIII 41.6) as well as to Soma (e.g. I 11.20; IX 32.2, 34.4, 86.20), may also have influenced the appearance of Varuṇa. The link between Trita and Varuṇa is the priestly wisdom which they share. Since Soma is a poet (IX 7.4, 94.3, 96.17) and a knower of the truth (IX 96.13, 97.48, 110.11), not only the connection with Trita, which Varuṇa and Soma have, but also the priestly wisdom, which all three possess, might have played a part in this identification.

These associations between Varuṇa, Soma, Trita, and the ocean also appear in another hymn, VIII 41.6-8. However, these verses are elliptical riddle verses, whose meaning is manifold and intentionally obscure. Nevertheless, they are suggestive and so worth consideration:

VIII 41.6abc yāsmīn víśvāni kāvyā
 cakré nābhir iva śritā
 tritām jūtī saparyata

In whom all poems are fit, like a hub in a wheel--Trita, serve with swiftness!

VIII 41.7a-e yā āsv átka āśāye
 víśvā jātāny eṣām
 pāri dhāmāni marmṛśad

vāruṇasya puró gáye

vísve devā ánu vratám

Who (as) a cloak lies here upon these, (who) surrounds all creatures of these (gods) and (their) institutes--before (him), in the domain of Varuṇa, all the gods (move) according to (his) commandment.

VIII 41.8a-e sá samudró apīcyàs

turó dyām iva rohati

ní yád āsu yájur dadhé

sá māvā arcínā padā

-strṇān nākam āruhat

He, (as) the secret ocean, swift like (the sun) into the sky, ascends when he has established the ritual formula among these. He has spread out (his) mysterious powers with (his) shining foot. He has ascended to the vault of heaven.

Trita here is probably Varuṇa, though it is unclear why he should bear this name. The verse suggests that Trita is somehow connected with priestly wisdom, which Varuṇa, as the master of truth, also possesses. Indeed, vs. 5, just preceeding this section, refers to Varuṇa as a poet who produces many poems (sá kaviḥ kāvyā purú... puṣyati). The ṛṣi also leaves unclear what it is that Varuṇa lies upon in vs. 7 and has established the yajus among in vs. 8. The pronouns are both fem. pl., so an obvious possibility for both are the waters (cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 51 n.6; Geldner RVÜ II: 355). But Renou (EVP VII: 30) prefers kṣitīṣu "the dwelling places" after VII 88.7. Or āsu in both verses might refer to the dawns or the cows which symbolize them (cf. vss. 3, 5). In any case, it is not certain that Varuṇa is lying upon the waters.

The connection between Varuṇa and the waters is sure in line 8a, where Varuṇa is called a "secret ocean." Geldner and Renou see in it a reference to Varuṇa as god of the sea. But why is this a secret ocean? And why is

Varuṇa identified with it and not simply master of it or dwelling within it? Hillebrandt (1927-29 II: 7) rightly points out that the description "secret ocean" is far more appropriate to Soma than to Varuṇa. Soma is called samudrá in IX 64.8, 86.29, and 97.40, and he too is described as "rising into heaven" (cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 207ff.), like the secret ocean in 8a. Thus, to call Varuṇa the "secret ocean" is probably to identify him as Soma. He is a secret ocean because Varuṇa's identity as Soma is not revealed, because the ascent of this ocean is unseen, and because the ascent is mysteriously reflected in the natural world. Soma ascends to heaven through the ritual, and then descends again as the rain (cf. IX 74.3). Similarly, in nature, water rises from the ocean, and descends again as rain. These two cycles--the "ritual" and the "natural"--are ultimately identical: Soma is the ocean which ascends to heaven. The equivalence of these cycles may have motivated the identification of Varuṇa and Soma. Varuṇa is master of the rains and the "natural" cycle which produces them; Soma governs the "ritual" cycle. But since the two cycles are ultimately one, Soma and Varuṇa must also be identified.

Thus, in these verses, the poets stress Varuṇa's connection with the water, but not to the exclusion of his other characteristics. His lordship over men and the world is still much in evidence. There is one element however, which suggests strongly that Varuṇa is a god of the waters. Repeatedly, the poets describe him as entering the ocean (samudrá). Why do they do so? The answer is not that Varuṇa is the god of the ocean, for this view of Varuṇa would then occur more widely in the RV.⁷⁵ Varuṇa's lordship over the rains, which arise from the ocean, may be part of the

⁷⁵ Outside of these passages, the only clear reference to Varuṇa as a god of the ocean is I 161.14, below. But compare also I 163.4 and II 38.8.

answer. But I suspect that the ritual and its symbolism were the primary factors.

The poets know that the ritual procedures affect the world because they represent natural processes. For example, Soma is lord of the rain partly because he drips through the filter like rain (cf. IX 63.27). Similarly, the waters into which Soma enters are often called the ocean (samudrá, cf. IX 29.3; 61.16; 63.23; 64.16f., 19, 27, 66.12; 86.8; 96.19; 107.15). Samudrá is not simply a metaphor for these waters. In mixing with them, Soma enters into all the waters, cf. IX 86.8ab rājā samudrām nadyò ví gāhate, 'pām ūrmīm sacate sīndhuṣu śritāḥ "King (Soma) hides himself in the ocean (and) the rivers; he follows the flood of the waters, when placed among the rivers." The ocean is the source of rain, and by entering it, Soma controls the rain. Therefore, the poets call on him to send the rain, the ocean's treasure: IX 97.44d rayīm ca na ā pavasvā samudrāt "And through purifying yourself, give us the wealth from the ocean."

Partly because they both rule the waters and the rain, Soma, on entering the mixing waters, becomes Varuṇa. But Soma and Varuṇa are different: Soma is known as visibly present in the ritual and Varuṇa as invisibly present in the world. Thus, whereas in IX 86.8, Soma both mixes with the ritual waters and enters the waters in general, in the Soma/Varuṇa passages, these functions are divided: Soma as Soma acts in the ritual and Soma as Varuṇa in the world.⁷⁶ As noted above, the ritual waters are often called samudrá "ocean," which expresses their symbolic meaning, their significance in the world beyond the ritual. Thus, since the ritual waters represent the

⁷⁶Cf. IX 90.2, in which Soma amid the waters is compared to Varuṇa amid the streams. Varuṇa rules the waters in the natural world the way Soma does in the ritual.

samudrá, when Soma as Soma enters them, Soma as Varuṇa must enter the ocean. Therefore, the ocean is introduced because it is part of the symbolism of the ritual waters, not because Varuṇa is a god of the ocean. Once Varuṇa is associated with the ocean, however, the image of "Varuṇa in the ocean" could become stereotyped and eventually grafted onto his character.

The view that Varuṇa is the god of the waters, who dwells in the ocean, does occur in the RV. But it does so only in one, or possibly two, verses which come from the very latest strata of the text. The clearer example is:

I 161.14: divā yānti marúto bhūmyāgnír
ayām vāto antárikṣeṇa yāti
adbhír yāti varuṇaḥ samudráir
yusmāñ ichántaḥ śavaso napātaḥ

The Maruts travel in heaven; Agni, on the ground; the Vāta here travels through the atmosphere. Through the waters and oceans travels Varuṇa--(all of them) seeking you, (o Ṛbhus), offspring of strength.

For this poet, it is characteristic of Varuṇa to be among the waters, the way the Maruts are in heaven, Agni on the earth, and Vāta in the air. Such a characterization of Varuṇa in this hymn may have resulted because there really is no god of the oceans in the RV, and because Varuṇa lacks any other obvious place in the natural world.

Another late verse, but one whose meaning is far more obscure, is I 163.4:

I 163.4cd: utéva me varuṇás chantsy arvan
yātrā ta āhūḥ paramām janítram

And also appear⁷⁷ to me as Varuṇa, o swift one, (there) where they say is your farthest origin.

⁷⁷Chantsi must be translated as an imperative, cf. Narten 1964: 116.

According to Lüders (1951-59 I: 52), who follows Geldner (RVÜ I: 225f.), this verse describes the horse as Varuṇa because his origin is the sea. This is a possible interpretation, but only a possible one. The "farthest origin" of the horse actually may not be the waters. According to vs. 1, the horse is born "from the ocean or from the púriṣa (samudrād utá vā púriṣāt). Geldner translates púriṣa as the "Urquell," which supports his interpretation of vs. 4, but púriṣa probably refers to the land in opposition to the ocean (cf. Renou EVP XVI: 87). If so, then vs. 1 is of little help in understanding vs. 4.

Another possibility is that, since the horse in this hymn represents the sun-horse (so Geldner), its origin is the eastern horizon. In that case, the poet here is asking that the sun, as it rises in the east, become the visible form of Varuṇa. The reason he does so is still obscure, but Varuṇa is elsewhere connected with the rising sun. He prepares the way for the sun (cf. I 24.8; VII 87.1). The sun itself is called an ādityá (cf. vs. 3). And the rising sun is invoked as a witness to the offenselessness of men before Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman (VII 62.2, cf. 60.1). In the last analysis, however, this verse was composed as an enigma and remains one.

Summary

I began with the suggestion that váruṇa was related to vratá and that Varuṇa is fundamentally the god of vratá. The first problem, therefore, was to establish the meaning of vratá. According to my analysis, and contrary to Schmidt 1958, vratá means "commandment" or "authority." The second was to establish the connection between Varuṇa and vratá.

The evidence for understanding Varuṇa as the god of vratá is of two kinds. First, in some passages, váruṇa virtually replaces vratá or the phrase

váruṇasya vratá "commandment of Varuṇa, god of commandments." In such instances, váruṇa appears in constructions otherwise characteristic of vratá or parallel to concepts synonymous to vratá. Also, in the AV, a masculine vratá appears in place of váruṇa, and twice in the RV, Agni is called váruṇa because he acts as a god who commands.

Second, the functions of Varuṇa are logically those of a god of commandments. His functions divide into three broad categories. First, Varuṇa is lord over the natural world, which he rules through his vratá. Second, Varuṇa is lord over men and the divine image of the king. Not only is he, like Mitra, called a king, but like a king he has spies and fetters to punish. Once again, this authority is exercised through his vratá. Finally, Varuṇa is lord over the waters. Often these are the rain waters, though Varuṇa is also lord of all life-giving waters. In certain passages, this rule is no more than one aspect of his rule over nature. Elsewhere, however, the special responsibility of the king to ensure the fertility and prosperity of his kingdom is reflected in Varuṇa's control of the waters. Or again, the lordship over the rain is sometimes connected with his role as the dispenser of rewards and punishments. In any case, for the bulk of the RV, Varuṇa is not a god of the waters, whose proper sphere is the waters alone. Rather, he governs the waters as the god of authority over the world.

Varuṇa in the Later Veda

During the post-Rgvedic period, the conception of Varuṇa went through a transformation, which eventually gave the god a different character in the epic and classical period. This change already began in the AV and in the mantras of the YV. In order to discuss the later Vedic conception of Varuṇa,

I have grouped together all the Vedic material from the AV on. This procedure is not entirely satisfactory, for it diminishes the differences among various texts, but it is justified by their broadly similar descriptions of Varuṇa and the interests of economy and clarity.

Two images dominate the young Vedic descriptions of Varuṇa: he is the god who binds and the god of the waters. Both of these images have their roots in the RV, but the poets and yājñikas of the later Veda apply and develop them in original ways.

Varuṇa, the god who binds

The first, and more prominent, of these two major images of Varuṇa is that of the god who seizes (grah) his victims or binds them with rope (rājju) or fetters (pāśa).⁷⁸ The rope (ŚB I 3.1.14; III 2.4.18) and the knot (ŚB I 3.1.16) belong to him. Time and again, the Brāhmaṇas describe rites for release from the fetters or ropes of Varuṇa. The avabhṛtha-bath, for example, is said to come from (GB I 4.7) or belong to (ŚB IV 4.5.14) Varuṇa, for it frees the sacrificer from Varuṇa's fetters (ŚB III 8.5.10; IV 5.5.11, cf. Thite 1975: 174). The Varuṇapraghāsa, according to KB V 3, was first performed by Prajāpati to release his offspring from the fetters of Varuṇa and from all other evils. During the birth ritual of the Taittirīyakas, the child is bathed while mantras proclaiming his delivery from the fetters of Varuṇa are recited (cf. Heesterman 1957: 18). In addition to such important rites as these, many other incidental rites and offerings to release the sacrificer from the danger of Varuṇa's fetters are mentioned in various parts of the young Veda. AV VII 83, for example, contains an appeal to Varuṇa to release the sacrificers from his fetters. According to the KauśS, this

⁷⁸Cf. Lévi 1898: 153f.

hymn is recited during a ritual in which a person afflicted with dropsy⁷⁹ is washed by bunches of grass (KauśS XXXII 14f.) or during an animal offering (KauśS CXXVII 4).

Elsewhere in these texts, Varuṇa "seizes" (grah) his victims and binds them. Thus, during the preparation for the installation of the fire, as the adhvaryu loosens the knot of the sling holding the fire-pan, he recites a verse asking Varuṇa for release from his fetters (TS IV 2.1.g). The reason for this, TS V 2.3.3 explains, is that Varuṇa seizes him who takes hold of the fire-pan. The fetters are the means by which Varuṇa catches his victims. This is made explicit by TB I 6.5.4 "If (the adhvaryu) should offer the oblation in the āhavanīya-(fire), he would cause the sacrificer to be seized by Varuṇa's fetter. (So) he offers it in the dakṣiṇāgni (and thus) causes the rival (of the sacrificer) to be seized by Varuṇa's fetter."⁸⁰

As in the RV, the effect of being seized by Varuṇa or caught in his fetter is disease, misfortune, or even death (cf. Renou 1960: 301). Dropsy is frequently said to be caused by Varuṇa, but any illness may be attributed to the god (cf. Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 23), for to be diseased is to be seized by Varuṇa (MS II 1.2 (3: 10) vāruṇagrhitō vā eṣā yā āmayāvi, cf. KS X 4 (128: 9)). Indeed, seizure in Varuṇa's fetters becomes virtually a metaphor for disease of all kinds (cf. Thite 1975: 61).

The reason that Varuṇa binds will dictate, to a great degree, the interpretation of his nature. Normally, in the later Veda, Varuṇa binds

⁷⁹The fetters of Varuṇa materialize as disease, especially as this disease. See directly below.

⁸⁰TB I 6.5.4 yād āhavanīye juhuyāt, yājamānaṃ varuṇapāśēna grāhayet, dakṣiṇe 'gnāu juhōti, bhrātrvyam eva varuṇapāśēna grāhayati. Cf. Lévi 1898: 154.

as a punishment for ritual error. In ŚB III 9.1.21, for example, a sacrifice to Varuṇa is prescribed as a general remedy for any ritual infractions which might have been committed in the preceding sacrifices: "Then, finally, he sacrifices a (victim) for Varuṇa; thereby, he frees him [= the sacrificer] from every fetter of Varuṇa, from every (transgression) against Varuṇa."⁸¹ Similarly, the avabhṛtha-bath, which frees from the fetters of Varuṇa, is primarily an expiation for any ritual offenses (cf. Keith 1925 II: 478). He who (incorrectly) performs the Agniṣṭoma after the sun has arisen is seized by Varuṇa, according to TB I 4.4.3. And finally, according to ŚB IV 5.1.5, Varuṇa seizes what is wrongly offered (dūriṣṭa) because his function is to guard against all ritual mistakes. This emphasis on ritual error occurs because these texts are preoccupied with the ritual. A concept of Varuṇa as the avenger of all wrong, not just ritual offense, lies behind it.

But in many other cases, no ritual error motivates the attack of Varuṇa. The sacrificer or elements of the sacrifice itself may also be bound, if the symbolism of the ritual suggests a tying or fettering. Thus, according to ŚB I 3.1.14, the wife of the sacrificer is to be girded not only with a cord (yóktra), but also with a garment, for the cord is Varuṇa's rope (rājju) and the garment represents the plants which protect her from that rope. If the garment were not used, then Varuṇa would bind her as the cord binds her. The threat of Varuṇa's fetters here has nothing to do with an error; it exists because of the mechanics of the ritual. Or again, in ŚB III 6.3.19f., the sacrificer who undertakes initiation (dīkṣā) is said to be entrapped between the jaws of Agni and Soma. A victim is

⁸¹ŚB III 9.1.21 átha vāruṇám antatá ālabhate, tád enaṃ sárvasmāḍ varuṇapāsāt sárvasmāḍ varuṇyāt pramuñcati.

offered in order to redeem him, and, after this is done, he emerges from seclusion with the words: "Svāhā! I am freed from Varuṇa's fetters" (svāhā nír vāruṇasya pāsān mucye), for, explains the text, "he is in Varuṇa's fetters who is in another's mouth" (varuṇapāsé vā eṣò 'ntárbhavati yò 'nyáśyāsán). Finally, in ŚB VI 4.3.8, the adhvaryu is told to make the rope which ties up the antelope skin "free from Varuṇa" (avaruṇyá), for otherwise it belongs to Varuṇa (varuṇyā vái yajñé rájjuḥ). These rites do not amend errors, but rather guard against a power which strikes for no purpose, a power that works mechanically, following the symbolism of the sacrifice. Although the power is called Varuṇa, it is actually created by the sacrifice itself, for the god himself exercises no independent will. These passages thus offer a view of Varuṇa--one totally foreign to the RV--as operating mechanically and as posing a constant threat, which the sacrifice has made present and must guard against. It is a view of Varuṇa which is dictated by Brāhmaṇic theology and therefore which serves as a warning that other factors, besides a conception of the god, affect the descriptions of that god.

Outside of these passages which focus primarily on the ritual, these texts also know Varuṇa as the avenger of "untruth" --lies and deceptions. For example, cf. AV IV 16.6:

AV IV 16.6 yé te pāsā varuṇa saptá-sapta
 tredhā tíṣṭhanti víṣitā rúśantah
 sinántu sárve ánṛtaṃ vādantaṃ
 yáḥ satyavādyāti táṃ sṛjantu

What fetters of yours, Varuṇa, in threefold groups of seven, stand untied (and ready), (which are) injurious, let these bind him who speaks untruth, (but) let them release him who speaks the truth.

In the RV, the man who is ṛtāvan "truthful" is he who is correct in both speech and action. Here, the truth to which the poet refers is the verbal truth (cf. Renou 1960: 301).

In vs. 8 of this hymn, the poet makes more clear the kind of true speaking which Varuṇa protects:

AV IV 16.8 yāḥ samāmyò vāruṇo yó vyāmyò
 yāḥ samdeśyò vāruṇo yó videśyāḥ
 yó daivó vāruṇo yás ca mānuṣaḥ

Varuṇa (it is) who the agreement, who the renunciation, guards; Varuṇa (it is) who the (evil) affixed, who the (evil) relieved, guards; Varuṇa (it is) who the divine, who the human, guards.⁸²

Varuṇa is lord over the truth of agreements or renunciations which have been sworn. He is also lord, as the second line says, over the means to punish those who are untruthful. He can seize them with fetters or release them.⁸³ The last line declares that Varuṇa rules in all such matters,

⁸²I have followed Hoffmann 1969: 202ff. in the interpretation of samāmyà, vyāmyà, samdeśyà, and videśyà. His translation (p. 206) is: "Varuṇa (ist es), der über den Vertragseid, der über die Abschwörung wacht, Varuṇa (ist es), der über die magische Zuweisung, über die magische Absweisung wacht; Varuṇa (ist es) der über Göttliches, über Menschliches wacht." Cf. also Thieme 1973: 341.

⁸³The interpretation of this line is the most problematic in this verse. Hoffmann (1969: 204ff.) bases his interpretation on the verbal form (anu) sám diś in vs. 9: táis tvā sárvaír abhí syāmi páśair, asāv āmuṣyāyaṇāmuṣyāḥ putra, tān u te sárvaṇ anusāmdisāmi. He translates, "Mit allen diesen Fesseln binde ich dich, du Soundso, aus dem Geschlecht des Soundso, Sohn der Soundso, diese alle weise ich dir nacheinander (anu-) zu." Verse 8, therefore describes, according to Hoffmann, the application by magic ("magische Zuweisung") of Varuṇa's fetters. From the verb, he postulates a noun *samdeśa and derives from it samdeśyà "zu einer magischen Zuweisung gehörend" (p. 205). If sám diś, therefore, means "to apply by magic," then ví diś must mean "to repel by magic," that is, it refers to the steps taken to counter the curse laid upon a person (p. 206). Hoffmann stresses the element of magic too much, I believe. The curse in vs. 9 (cf. also AV X 1.11f.) is a magic act practised by humans, but the punishment and remission mentioned in 8b are the independent work of the god. Indeed, vs. 9 was probably not even a part of the original hymn (cf. Lommel 1938: 461).

whether they involve gods or men.

This verse is completed, as Lommel (1938: 458ff.) argues, not by vs. 9, but by vs. 7, which originally followed vs. 8 and closed the hymn:

AV IV 16.7ab śatēna páśair varuṇābhí dhehi⁸⁴
 mā te mocy anṛtavāṇ nṛcakṣaḥ

O Varuṇa, encircle (him) with a hundred fetters. Let him who is untruthful not be freed from your (ropes), o you whose vision is on men.

The untruthful man is he who swears or forswears falsely. He assumes a commitment, which should have been authoritative for him. It should have governed his words and actions. Varuṇa, who is here still the god of authority, watches over such commitments and punishes those who do not honor them.⁸⁵

Not only the AV, but also the YV recognizes Varuṇa as the god who punishes those who violate their commitments. Compare, for example, TS II 2.6.2:

TS II 2.6.2 samvatsarāya vā etáu sám amāte yáu samamāte, táyor yāḥ
 púrvo 'bhidrúhyati tám vāruṇo grhṇāti

For a year, these two make an agreement, who make an agreement. Which of them who first acts with deception--him Varuṇa seizes.

The passage then goes on to describe the ritual recourse which a person has to avoid the onslaught of Varuṇa.⁸⁶ One of the reasons that Varuṇa

⁸⁴Following the Ppp. AVŚ reads abhí dhehi varuṇainam.

⁸⁵The addition of vs. 9 changes the nature of the hymn. Originally it was probably part of an oath-taking ceremony (cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 31). The addition of the last verse, however, turns the hymn into a curse against a specific person, who has already violated such an oath.

⁸⁶Cf. MS II 1.2 (2: 7ff.); MS II 5.6 (55: 14ff.); KS X 3 (127: 3ff.); KS XII 1 (180: 1ff.); and Hoffmann 1969: 199f.

figures so prominently in such matters is that no human authority could possibly guarantee the inviolability of these agreements. Thus, they invoke the power of the ominous Varuṇa, who is known as a god who punishes malefactors and liars and whose fetters always stand ready to catch them. It may appear odd that Varuṇa, rather than Mitra, who is the god of alliances in the RV, should be the guardian of an oath (AV IV 16) or an agreement (TS II 2.6.2). Recall, however, that in the young Veda, Mitra becomes a peace-maker and a helpful ally. It would thus be out of character for him now to be put into a position of having to punish someone for the infringement of a commitment. Thus Varuṇa, who remains very much an avenger, inherits a function which was once characteristically Mitra's.

Elsewhere in the AV, the specific kind of falsehood or deception that Varuṇa punishes is not indicated. AV I 10, for example, is a hymn to release someone from the wrath (manyú) of Varuṇa, which, according to KauśS XXV 37, has taken form as a sickness. Verses 2 and 3 indicate the cause to which the disease is attributed:

AV I 10.2ab nāmas te rājan varuṇāstu manyāve
viśvaṃ hy ūgra nicikéṣi drugdhām

Homage be to you, o king Varuṇa, (and) to your wrath, for you observe every deception, o mighty one.

AV I 10.3 yád uvákthānrtaṃ
jihváyā vṛjinām bahú
rājñas tvā satyādharmāno
muñcāmi varuṇād ahām

Since you [= the victim] have spoken much untruth, much (that was) crooked with your tongue--I release you from king Varuṇa, whose institutes are real.

Here the deception, untruth, and crookedness of the victim are not defined, but they are lies of some sort.

The YV shows the same sort of conception of Varuṇa's opposition to untruth. Very similar to the preceding verses is a passage which occurs in several versions in the YV. The Taittirīya version is:

TS I 3.11.f dhāmno-dhāmno rājann itó varuṇa no muñca, yád āpo
āghniyā varuṇéti śápāmahe táto varuṇa no muñca⁸⁷

From every institute, o king Varuṇa, from this free us. If we swear by the waters, by cattle, (or) by Varuṇa, from that free us, Varuṇa.

There is no need to change dhāmno-dhāmnaḥ to dāmno-dāmnaḥ as PW proposes.⁸⁸

The term dhāman refers not only to the institute or rule which Varuṇa lays down, but also implies the penalty which infraction of that rule brings.

When the adhvaryu asks for freedom from "every institute," he means only that he may be free from any punishment which he might deserve under those institutes. The second half of this mantra is similar. The release sought is not from every oath: it is rather from the punishment which comes from breaking an oath.

In these passages, Varuṇa is, as he was in the RV, a just judge, who metes out punishment not only for ritual error, but also for offense against a religiously sanctioned rule. Because he does so, he also continues to bear epithets like dhármapati or dhármanaspati "lord of dhárman" (e.g. KS XV 5 (212: 16f.); ŚB V 3.3.9, etc.) and satyādharmāno "whose dhárman is real" (e.g. AV I 10.3; TS I 8.10.1; TB I 7.10.3, etc.), which mark him as a king watching over his people (cf. Rau 1957: 95).

But these references to the justice of Varuṇa are balanced and ultimately out-weighted by the increasing ominousness in Varuṇa's character. In

⁸⁷With slight variations, MS I 2.18 (28: 5ff.) and KS III 8 (27: 1f.). The corresponding mantra in the VS is VS VI 22 yád āhūr āghniyā iti varuṇéti śápāmahe.

⁸⁸Cf. Eggeling 1882-1900 II: 216 n.1; Keith 1914 I: 47 n.1.

many passages, the ill and evil caused by Varuṇa and his fetters have no basis in the action of the victim, and Varuṇa emerges as a looming, terrible figure who may bind or seize without any specific reason. There is a similar development in the passages in which the ritual symbolism of binding can cause seizure by Varuṇa. In these cases, however, the negative image of Varuṇa is created because he is the god associated with binding and not because he is evil. In the passages I am about to discuss, however, Varuṇa himself is dangerous and is perceived as a threatening god. It is Varuṇa himself "who seizes him who is seized by evil (pāpmán)," according to ŚB XII 7.2.17 and TS II 3.13. And similarly, according to ŚB IV 5.7.7, "whatsoever (a person) suffers here in this world, (it is) Varuṇa (who) inflicts all this,"⁸⁹ for Varuṇa is the ārpavitár the "afflicter." Similarly, in ŚB XI 2.6.7, to cut out the fore-portion for the brahman is to cut out what is "twisted around" (veṣṭitá), what is "knotted" (grathitá), what is "affected by Varuṇa" (varuṇyà). If a yoke-trained cow improperly draws the cart--that is her Varuṇic nature (ŚB V 2.4.13), and the axle which is bound on both sides is Varuṇa "of evil speech" (durvāk) in TS VI 2.9.1. Finally, it is either Varuṇa or Rudra which stands at the end of a series of offerings because "the last of a series is the bearer of the dangerous aspect of the powers involved in the series" (Heesterman 1957: 70n.5). All these passages force the same conclusion: in these instances, Varuṇa himself is a dangerous power to be avoided.

In the RV, the poets also approached Varuṇa as a potentially dangerous god, but their aim was to reconcile themselves to him and to be prosperous under the authority of the divinity. In the later Veda, the very authority of Varuṇa is seen as a dangerous thing. In AV VIII 7.10, for example,

⁸⁹ŚB IV 5.7.7 yád vā idaṃ kim cārcchāti vāruṇa evēdāṃ sárvam ārpayati.

certain medicinal plants are called vivaruṇá "freeing from Varuṇa." The cow with which the soma is purchased, according to ŚB III 2.4.18, is addressed with the mantra mitrás tvā padí badhnītām "Let Mitra bind you by the foot." Varuṇa, not Mitra, is usually associated with binding, so the text goes on to explain this anomaly:

ŚB III 2.4.18 varuṇyà vā eṣá yád rájjuḥ, sá yád rájvābhíhitā syād
varuṇyà syād, yád v ānabhihitā syād áyateva syād,
etád vā avaruṇyám yán maitráṃ, sá yáthā rájvābhíhitā
yataivám asyái tád bhavati yád āha mitrás tvā padí
badhnītām íti

This rope, in truth, belongs to Varuṇa. If she [= the cow] were tied with a rope, she would belong to Varuṇa, but if she were untied, she would be uncontrolled. What belongs to Mitra, that, in truth, does not belong to Varuṇa. Since she, tied with a rope, is controlled, thus it is in the case of this (cow) here when he says, "May Mitra bind you by the foot."

To belong to Varuṇa, to be under his authority, is here equivalent to a state of great misfortune. How different it is from the RV, where the poet hopes he will be happy under the "authority" or "commandment" (vratá) of Varuṇa! Here, as in the RV, there is a recognition of the need for control, but the control exercised by Varuṇa is considered negative. His once beneficent authority is transferred to Mitra.

Similar to these passages is also ŚB III 7.4.1:

ŚB III 7.4.1 pāsaṃ krtvá prátimuñcati, rtásya tvā devahaviḥ pāsena
prátimuñcāmíti, varuṇyà vā eṣá yád rájjuḥ, tád enam
etád rtásyaivá pāsena prátimuñcati, tátho hainam eṣá
varuṇyà rájjur ná hinastí

Making a fetter, he binds (the sacrificial animal), (saying), "With the fetter of truth I bind you, o oblation to the gods." That rope, in truth, belongs to Varuṇa. Thus, in that very way, he binds it with the fetter of truth, and thus, the rope of Varuṇa does not harm it.

As in ŚB III 2.4.18, Varuṇa's authority over the rope-bound animal is mitigated by the imposition of a second, less threatening authority. Before that authority was Mitra; here it is the truth, the ṛtá itself, which does not replace the authority of Varuṇa but which protects the animal from it. Again, the conceptual distance between the R̥gvedic vision of Varuṇa as the master of truth, whose authority is coincident with that of the truth, and this passage, in which the authority of the truth contrasts to that of Varuṇa, points toward a very different idea of Varuṇa.

Danger can come from the R̥gvedic Varuṇa, but it is the danger of a just punishment. In that text, there is nothing of the looming, even evil character which the young Veda describes. The passages from the RV, which have been cited to show that this later ambiguity is already present do not bear close scrutiny. Renou (1960: 302), for example, mentions RV VII 61.5, in which, according to him, the drúhaḥ, the "deceivers," are in the service of Varuṇa and Mitra:

RV VII 61.5 ámūrā víśvā vṛṣaṇāv imā vām
 ná yāsu citráṃ dadṛśe ná yakṣám
 drúhaḥ sacante áṇṛtā jánānām
 ná vām niṇyāny acíte abhūvan

Geldner (RVÜ II: 237), Oldenberg (Noten II: 49), and Renou (EVP V: 86, VII: 58) all construe ámūrā víśvāḥ ... imāḥ ... yāsu ... with drúhaḥ in line c. Thus Geldner translates: "Ihr Bullen, alle beide unfehlbar, diese Anschläge von euch, bei denen man weder Zeichen noch Wunder sieht, folgen den Unredlichkeiten der Menschen. Nicht sind euch beiden Geheimnisse unbekannt geblieben." The drúhaḥ, he comments, are personifications of the cunning stratagems used by the gods against evil-doers. But drúh "deception, deceiving" is consistently opposed by the Ādityas. It is not

an ally of the gods, but their enemy (cf. I 133.1; III 31.19; IV 23.7), and, like ánṛta, is the opposite of truth (ṛtá), never its defender (cf. I 121.4, 133.1; II 23.17; VII 75.1).⁹⁰

The key to the correct interpretation of this verse must come from the phrase sacante áṇṛtaṃ jánānām. What or who would most naturally "follow the untruth of men?" From the context, the most reasonable supposition would be the spies of Mitra and Varuṇa, already mentioned in vs. 3 of this same hymn: VII 61.3cd spáso dadhāthe ósadhiṣu vikṣv, ṛdhag yató ánimiṣaṃ rákṣamānā "You place (your) spies amid the plants and the settlements, (for thus are you) protecting the winking one [= the mortal] from him who goes separately (i.e. against customary behavior)." Macdonell (1917: 122) already suggested this possibility, but he also proposed construing drúhaḥ as an adjective with the understood subject. This is impossible, for the foremost characteristic of the spies is that they oppose all deception. Thus, the Maruts are addressed in IX 73.7 as adrúha spáśaḥ "spies free of deception," and in VI 67.5, the spies of Mitra and Varuṇa are called ádabdhāsaḥ "undeceivable."⁹¹ If the spies are the likely subject of line c and drúh cannot describe them, then drúhaḥ must be an object parallel to ánṛtaṃ, which is virtually synonymous with drúh. The line is, therefore, a simple chiasmus: "(the spies) pursue the

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Velankar (1963: 144), on grounds similar to those I have mentioned, also rejected the idea that drúhaḥ were the agents of Varuṇa and Mitra. He instead separates lines ab and cd, but he still takes drúhaḥ as the subject of sacante. He comments that these "evil spirits" do not serve the gods, but rather attack men when the gods withdraw their protection. This solution is unlikely, for drúh is not really an "evil spirit" and does not elsewhere "attack" men who have offended the gods. It is rather the deception which men themselves create.

⁹¹Cf. also IV 4.3, in which Agni is asked to send his spies in order that he become an "undeceivable protector of this settlement" (pāyúr viśó asyā ádabdhāḥ).

deceptions and untruth of men."⁹²

The problem then becomes the construction of the first two lines. If ab is separated from cd, then the "spies" would fit the description provided by ámūrā víśvāh and ná yāsu citráṁ dadṛśe ná yakṣám.⁹³ The spies of Mitra and Varuṇa are in fact described as ámūrāh "wise" in VI 67.5, and citrám and yakṣám in line b need not have the negative connotation which other interpreters have placed on them.⁹⁴ They mean only that the subject described, working marvellously, shows no appearance or sign of its action. Such a description would fit the spies who have been placed "among plants and settlements" to survey the activities of men in the service of Mitra and Varuṇa.

The only real objection to this interpretation is that ámūrāh and yāsu are feminine, and spásah is elsewhere masculine. But the gender of root stems is variable. An agent noun ought to be masculine, but feminine nouns, which predominate in this class, can have this value (cf. Whitney 1888: §384, p. 144). Thus, a number of nouns are both masculine and feminine with much the same meaning, e.g. drúh, yúj, rayí, etc. Judging from the way in which the poet of VII 61 speaks of the spásah in vs. 3, he is probably not thinking so much of fully personified agents as of rather formless powers, which constitute the gods' ability to follow all

⁹²The accentuation of drúhah poses no problem. Cf. I 121.4, 133.1; III 31.19; VII 75.1; VIII 37.2, in which drúhah is acc. pl. See also Grassmann 1872: sp. 648.

⁹³Velankar follows the Pp. in taking ámūrā víśvā(h) as dual forms. Macdonell interprets ámūrā as dual, but víśvāh as fem. pl.

⁹⁴Velankar: "'artificial decoration without sincerity and mysterious unintelligibility' are meant by the two words." Macdonell: "deceit" and "magic." Renou: "miracle" and "phantom."

human activities. Conceived in this way, such powers might be feminine as well as masculine.

The correct translation of VII 61.5, therefore, is likely: "All these wise ones of you two, o bulls, among which are seen neither appearance nor sign, follow the deceptions and untruth of men. No secrets exist to be unperceived by you two." If so, then nothing of the "streak of craftiness" which is supposed to be part of the character of Varuṇa is, in fact, attested in the RV.⁹⁵

The image of Varuṇa as the god who binds and seizes, though it emerges from the Rgvedic conception of him, is thus largely a development of the later Veda. Most obviously contiguous with the Rgvedic tradition is the view of him as the god who fetters and punishes those who transgress the institutes of the gods. For the most part, these institutes are the rules that govern ritual accuracy and the offenses he punishes are thus ritual infractions. But this is no more than we would expect, since we are dealing with ritual texts. Very distinct from the RV, however, is the young Vedic tendency to associate any kind of binding with Varuṇa. Thus, where the symbolism of the ritual suggests fettering, the texts warn that these fetters belong to Varuṇa and presage the injury which the god will do unless certain steps are taken. In these instances, Varuṇa is no longer a just avenger, but he becomes a constant threat, a presence to be avoided if possible. This image of him as a terrible, threatening figure establishes itself independently and distinctly in the young Veda. He becomes the cause of all misfortune, and a god whose authority is to be feared, not acceded to, as in the RV.

⁹⁵For II 27.3, in which interpreters (e.g. Renou EVP VII: 58) have also seen deceitfulness in the Ādityas, see pp. 261 f.

This development was undoubtedly further encouraged by his relationship to Mitra. Since the two gods tend to symbolize pairs of opposites, and since Mitra becomes associated with what is auspicious and Varuṇa with what is inauspicious, Mitra and Varuṇa were stereotyped as good and evil respectively. Such a view of the two is utterly foreign to the RV, which, while it has a very healthy regard for the power of Varuṇa and his anger, in no way envisions him as deceptive or destructive.

Varuṇa, god of the waters

Alongside this view of Varuṇa as the god who binds and seizes is another which has very little relation to it. This is the association between Varuṇa and the waters, which in the young Veda, in contrast to the R̥gveda, develops into a primary characteristic of the god. Whereas in the RV, Varuṇa rules the waters in the exercise of his authority, by the time of the Brāhmaṇas, any reference to the waters is likely to evoke the name Varuṇa (cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 46ff.). Of course, many of the same themes which linked Varuṇa to the waters in the RV continue in the young Veda.

As in the RV, for example, Varuṇa is summoned to send the rains:

AV IV 15.12 apó niṣiñcānn ásurah pitā nah
 śvāsantu gārgarā apām varuṇa
 áva nīcīr apāh srja vādantu
 pr̥śnibāhavo maṇḍūkā iriṇānu

(Since you are) our father and lord, who sends down the waters, let the gurgling-streams of water purl, o Varuṇa. Let down the descending water. Let the speckled-limbed frogs croak along the gullies.

Similarly, in the YV, one of the purposes of the Varunapraghāsa was to bring the rain.⁹⁶

⁹⁶Gonda 1960:80 (in which he inadvertantly miscites KS XXXVI 17).

So too, Varuṇa directs the waters as one part of his rule over the natural world, just as he does in the RV:

AV IV 16.3 utéyām bhūmir várūnasya rājña
 utāsáu dyaur bṛhatī dūrēantā
 utó samudráu várūnasya kuṣṣī
 utāsmínn álpa udaké nīlīnah

Moreover, this earth belongs to king Varuṇa and likewise yonder lofty sky with its distant boundaries. And also the two oceans are the bellies of Varuṇa, and in this small amount of water is he hidden.

Varuṇa's rule extends everywhere: he is present in every land, in heaven, and on the seas. More particularly, according to the last line, he is even present in the water used in the oath-taking ritual at which this hymn is recited. Thus, while emphasis falls on his presence in and mastery of the waters, it is no different in kind than his lordship over the whole world (cf. also AV III 13.2).

Finally, the young Veda also maintains that Varuṇa's kingship is founded on his mastery of the waters. This idea is implied in the symbolism of the anointing of the king, for it is Varuṇa, who dwells among the unctio waters, who also bestows dominion on the king. Thus, according to AB VIII 18, at the moment at which the unction is performed, the king is addressed with the words:

AB VIII 18 ni śasāda dhṛtavrato varuṇah pastyāsv ā
 sāmrājyāya bhaujyāya svārājyāya vairājyāya pārameṣṭhyāya
 rājyāya mārājyāyādhipatyāya svāvaśyātīṣṭhāya sukratuḥ

Varuṇa, whose authority is established, has installed himself among the pastyāh (the waters)⁹⁷ for universal rule, for bountiful lordship, for rule over one's own, for far-flung rule, for supreme rule, for great rule, for over-lordship, for authority, for pre-eminence (since he is one) whose will is strong.⁹⁸

⁹⁷For pastyā in the young Veda, see above pp. 94ff. n.

⁹⁸Cf. also TS I 8.11.c in which the waters of consecration are addressed as the "givers of rule" (rāṣṭradā).

But the association of Varuṇa and the waters has been generalized in the young Veda to such a degree that Varuṇa is transformed into the god of the waters. Thus, in TS III 4.5.a, just as the Wind is the over-lord of the atmosphere, the Sun of the heaven, the Moon of the stars, Bṛhaspati of the brāhman, and Mitra of truths, so is Varuṇa overlord of the waters (cf. AV V 24.4). The waters belong to Varuṇa (MS II 5.6 (55: 4); TS II 1.9.2) or, more specifically, the non-flowing waters are his (ŚB IV 4.5.10; V 3.4.12; TS VI 4.2.3f., cf. Lüders 1951-59 I: 47). The waters are the wives of Varuṇa (TS V 5.4.1; TB I 1.3.8).⁹⁹

He becomes the god that dwells amid the waters. Thus, according to KB V 5, to give offerings to Varuṇa in the waters is to give him delight in his own abode.¹⁰⁰ So general is Varuṇa's association with the waters, in fact, that any reference to the waters is likely to be accompanied by mention of the god. The person who enters the waters at the avabhṛtha-bath becomes Varuṇa (KB XVIII 9). If the sacrificial horse drowns, the sacrifice is to be offered to Varuṇa, "for Varuṇa seizes him who dies in water"¹⁰¹ (ŚB XIII 3.8.5). Should a person install a fire without first purifying himself with water, the expiation is an offering to Agni as

⁹⁹ In the Yasna Haptanghaiti, the waters are the wives of Ahura Mazda. This fact is no evidence for an ancient association of Varuṇa and the waters. First, it is uncertain that Ahura Mazda either in the Gāthās or the later Avesta is merely the equivalent, substitute, or replacement of Indic Varuṇa. No doubt they emerge from the same conceptual complex--both are gods of wisdom and authority--but they do not necessarily share every characteristic. Rather, the ancient link between these two conceptions is that the waters are personified as the wives of one of the gods. In the RV, they become the wives of Indra (cf. I 32), who rescues them. The Brāhmaṇas have replaced Indra by Varuṇa, because of the increasing closeness of Varuṇa and the waters.

¹⁰⁰ KB V 5 yad apsu varuṇaṃ yajati sva evainaṃ tad āyatane prīṇāti, cf. also KB XVIII 10; TS VI 6.3.1, 4; TB I 6.5.6.

¹⁰¹ ŚB XIII 3.8.5 vāruṇo vā etāṃ grhṇāti yò 'psú mriyāte.

Varuṇa (AB VII 9). When a king is restored to his rule, Soma calls him back to the mountains of his kingdom and Indra to his people, but it is Varuṇa who calls him to the waters (AV III 3.3). In all these examples, Varuṇa appears primarily because whatever involves water involves Varuṇa.

Varuṇa as king and lord of dhārman

These then, are the two principle characteristics of Varuṇa in the young Veda: he is the god who binds and the god of the waters. At the same time, however, the basic epithets and recurrent characteristics of R̥gvedic Varuṇa remain in the later literature, although they no longer occupy the central place they once did. Varuṇa is still very much a divine king,¹⁰² and in many instances remains the epitome and symbol of kingship. Thus, according to ŚB XI 4.3.10, when Śrī sacrificed to recover her glory and power, she prayed to Varuṇa: "May Varuṇa, the universal king (samrāt), the lord of universal kings (samrāṭpatiḥ), bestow universal kingship (sāmrajyam) on me." Most importantly, Varuṇa plays a central role in the Rājasūya, the royal consecration. In fact, the Rājasūya is also called the Varuṇasava because the king becomes Varuṇa at his consecration (cf. Heesterman 1957: 85f.). As the texts themselves attest, the whole rite is a recapitulation of the original consecration of Varuṇa (cf. Lévi 1898: 152f.), who is a king of the gods (cf. MS I 6.11 (104: 2)). Similarly, Varuṇa is often equated with kṣatrā, the king's "rule," the authority he exercises. Thus, in ŚB II 5.2.6, Varuṇa is identified as the kṣatrā and the Maruts as the subjects (vīśaḥ),¹⁰³ and in ŚB IV 1.4.1ff.,

¹⁰² See above on the waters and kingship, and cf. ŚB II 2.3.1; AB I 24; MS I 6.11 (104: 2); TS I 8.14.1.f).

¹⁰³ Cf. also ŚB II 5.2.34, 36.

Varuṇa is the kṣatrā while Mitra is the brāhman.

Intimately connected with Varuṇa's rule is his support of dhárman. In ŚB V 3.3.9, for example, the king who makes an offering to Varuṇa Dharmapati, Varuṇa the "lord of dhárman," also becomes a lord of dhárman.¹⁰⁴ As in the RV, therefore, Varuṇa remains the divine image of the earthly king, whose power is the reflection of Varuṇa's, and whose rule has the same character. Here too Varuṇa's rule is founded on the maintenance of order within society, for the dhárman which Varuṇa upholds is the principle which defines the place and responsibilities of each person in society.

The Development of Varuṇa in the Veda

The nature of Varuṇa's kingship is particularly important because it provides a clue to the decline of Varuṇa and to the shift to his roles as god of binding and of the waters. At the time of the RV, authority was invested primarily in the king, who was the earthly reflection of Varuṇa, the god of authority or commandments. Religious and political ideology were thus congruent with one another. The Brāhmaṇas, however, assert that the authority of the king was dependent on a higher principle, the brāhman. The king possessed his dominion only if he had access to the brāhman. This is the meaning behind the insistence of the Brāhmaṇic teachers that the brāhman is the source of the kṣatrā. Thus, according to ŚB XII 7.3.12, when, during the straining of the milk in the Sautrāmaṇī, the priest says, "he purifies the brāhman and kṣatrā," the priest gives birth to the kṣatrā from the brāhman, "for from out of the brāhman is the kṣatrā engendered."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ ŚB V 3.3.9 vāruṇám yavamāyam carúm nīrvapati, tād enam vāruṇa evā dhāmapatir dhārmasya pātim karoti, cf. also ŚB V 3.3.11; TS I 8.10.2.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. ŚB XIV 4.2.23 (= BĀU I 4.11), and Heesterman 1957: 137, 160.

The only means of access to the brāhman is, of course, through the brahmán-s, who are the human representatives of that principle from which all other principles and powers derive. "All things," says ŚB XI 5.3.12, "disappear and emerge from the brāhmaṇa." The king, therefore, must acknowledge his dependence on the brāhmaṇa, just as the brāhmaṇa must acknowledge the authority of the kṣatriya. Thus, TS V 1.10.3 explains that through performing a particular rite, "by means of the brāhman, he sharpens the kṣatrā; by the kṣatrā, (he sharpens) the brāhman." "Therefore," the text continues, "the brāhmaṇa who allies with a king surpasses another brāhmaṇa (who does not)" and "the king who allies himself with a brāhmaṇa surpasses another king (who does not)."¹⁰⁶

This notion that royal authority was based on a principle to which the king had access only through a priestly class does not appear in the RV. There, royal authority found its source and justification in the authority of the god of commandments, Varuṇa, the divine king. Because Varuṇa ruled with authority in accordance with his fundamental character as the embodiment of authority, and the king, the human counterpart of Varuṇa, also ruled with authority. The king's power was thus clearly established independently of any priestly class. He himself was, for that matter, a priest-king, who had direct access to the authority and power of the sacred truth (cf. Schmidt 1968, especially pp. 237ff.). No other human agent was necessary to him. With the division of religious and temporal authority, the divine structure on which the old system was based naturally altered. For example, as Schmidt demonstrates, this process accounts for the development of Bṛhaspati as an independent deity. Originally, bṛhaspāti "lord

¹⁰⁶ TS V 1.10.3 brāhmaṇaivā kṣatrām samsyati kṣatreṇa brāhma, tasmād brāhmaṇo rājanyāvān āty anyām brāhmaṇām, ... rājanyo brāhmaṇāvān āty anyām rājanyām.

of the sacred formulation" was an epithet of Indra in his role as priest-king. When Indra broke open the Vala-cave, he did so not by means of the vajra or any other weapons of a warrior, but through the power of the sacred truths which as br̥haspāti and head of the priestly Aṅgirasas, he proclaimed. During the Ṛgvedic period itself, however, the king's sacerdotal responsibilities shifted to the purohita, the priest of the royal house, who became thereby the personification of sacred authority over against royal authority (cf. also Rau 1957: 117). Then, as the priest-king split into the king and his priest, so the figure Indra br̥haspāti fissioned to become Indra and Bṛhaspati.

Similarly, Varuṇa could not remain both the image of the earthly king and the god of authority, who rules over the world through the truth which he himself possesses. In that case, the king, because he is the image of Varuṇa, would also have possessed both religious and social authority directly. According to Brāhmaṇic thought, however, he did not have this status or hold these powers directly. It is rather Prajāpati, the personification of the yajñá, the Vedic sacrifice, or brāhman, the sacred principle to which the brāhmaṇas had access, which was ultimate. The king not only shared authority with the brāhmaṇas, but possessed powers because they were conferred on him by brāhmaṇas. Thus, during the Rājasūya, a brāhmaṇa hands the king a wooden sword, which is identified as the vajra, the symbol of royal authority (ŚB XIII 4.4.1), and, by doing so, makes the king powerful over his enemies but subordinate to himself (ŚB V 4.4.15). The king was thus delegated power, the way, upon becoming king, he himself delegated power (cf. ŚB V 4.4.16ff.).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷That the king's power was derived from the brāhmaṇa was an ideal which the brāhmaṇas hoped to impress upon the king. In actual (contd.)

With the loss of this central identity, Varuṇa had to change. As a result, the fragmentation which is typical of the Brāhmaṇic treatment of the Ṛgvedic gods was carried out to a greater degree in the case of Varuṇa, and characteristics which were not basic to his nature became prominent in the later texts. The patterns of behavior which were established for Varuṇa did not attribute to him a power comparable to that he possessed before. The real source of authority lay elsewhere than with him, and Varuṇa began his descent in religious significance, which finally culminated in his transformation into a forbidding spirit of the waters.

fact, the king did exercise authority over all other members of society, as the Brāhmaṇas themselves explicitly say (cf. Rau 1957: 62). The paradoxes of this situation are reflected in the ambiguities in these texts. Thus, according to MS IV 8.3 (110: 7) and KS XXVIII 5 (160: 1), the king is the "eater," the master, and the brāhmaṇa is the "food," the mastered, but in ŚB V 3.3.12; 4.2.3; IX 4.3.16, the king is the "eater" of all beings except the brāhmaṇa (cf. Rau 1957: 34).

ARYAMAN

The third and last of the major Ādityas, Aryaman, may be the most difficult of the three to interpret, because he does not appear as often or in as distinct contexts as the other two. For early Western scholarship, the interpretation of Aryaman turned primarily on the question of whether aryamán was a substantive in the RV, and if so, what its meaning might be.¹ Grassmann (1872: sp. 116), following Roth, held that aryamán in the RV was not only the name of a god, but also a noun meaning "comrade" (Busenfreund), or, more particularly, the friend of a groom, the groomsman (Brautwerber).² The god Aryaman bore this name because he manifested the character and qualities of a comrade or groomsman. Hillebrandt (1927-29 II: 69ff.) was even more specific. He tried to show that the characteristic function of the god was that of patron of wedlock and that the god himself could take the role of a heavenly bridegroom. For him, aryamán could mean either suitor or bridegroom.³

¹The later Indian tradition saw Aryaman as the sun, a view which probably developed from the Brāhmanic interpretation of the "path of Aryaman" as a heavenly passage. Cf. ŚB V 3.1.2, 5.2.12; TB I 7.6.6 and Sāyaṇa's comment on ŚB V 3.1.2. This interpretation had little support among Western scholars, but the idea that Aryaman might be a heavenly body did find its advocates. Oldenberg (1917: 190 n.1), in accordance with his view of the Ādityas as the sun, moon, and planets, tentatively identified Aryaman as the planet Venus, and Weber (1893: 138) saw him as the Milky Way. Neither view finds much support in the RV.

²This view was rejected by Bergaigne (1884: 190ff.). He argued that, whether some such idea might have been implied in the name aryamán or not, aryamán in the RV was never used as anything but a name.

³Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 76: "Es ist nicht richtig mit Roth (PW) und andren Gelehrten zu sagen, dass Aryaman der Brautwerber, der $\pi\epsilon\rho\alpha\nu\upsilon\mu\epsilon\theta\iota\omicron\varsigma$ sei; er ist vielmehr der junge Gatte oder Freier selbst."

The approach of Grassmann and Hillebrandt, though basically sound, is limited because the attestations of aryamán, either as the name of a god or a substantive, are too few to resolve the issue. Another, more productive approach was suggested by P. Thieme, especially in his Der Fremdling im Rgveda (1938). He attacked the problem of Aryaman only after carefully analyzing all the occurrences of arí and its derivative arya (from which aryamán is built) in the RV, and I am obliged to follow his example.

Thieme maintained that arí can consistently be translated as "stranger" in the RV. In fact, he argued, it is only this translation which can account for the variety of contexts in which the word appears. Sometimes it designates a friend, other times, an enemy; sometimes a host, other times, a guest. Only an underlying concept "stranger" is applicable in all these contexts. He went on to argue that the adjective arya normally meant "protecting the stranger, hospitable" (cf. I 123.1; II 35.2; V 16.3; VII 65.2, 86.7) or, as a substantive, "hospitable lord" (V 75.7; VIII 1.34) or simply "lord" (IV 16.17). The use of arya in the vocative as a substantive (e.g. IV 16.17; VIII 1.34) gave rise to an identifiably independent noun arya "hospitable lord," which developed the meanings "lord, master, householder" after the RV. Finally, aryamán is a nominal derivative formed from arya (Thieme 1938: 134ff., cf. 1957a: 77f.). The suffix -man- could produce an abstract noun, and, based on his discussion of arya, such a noun must mean "hospitality" (Gastlichkeit, Wirtlichkeit).⁴ Thus, Thieme concluded that the god Aryaman is "Hospitality" personified.

Beginning in 1941, G. Dumézil criticized and attempted to amend Thieme's formulations, thus setting off an increasingly bitter round of rejoinders

⁴Thieme 1938: 106.

and counter-rejoinders.⁵ Neither the details of Dumézil's critique or of Thieme's replies need detain us here, but one point raised by Dumézil deserves special note. He saw that, whenever it is possible to decide, the people designated by arí are always those who share the same cult and the same gods as the speaker.⁶ Might it not be, he asked, that arí is not simply any stranger, but rather a person of the same culture and society as the poets of the Vedic hymns? I find this restriction of the scope of arí quite justified and supportable, not only by the lack of non-Vedic arí-s, but also, more positively, by several Rgvedic passages. Especially important is X 28.1, in which a young woman about to be married says:

X 28.1ab vísvo hy ànyó arír ājaḡāma
 máméd āha śváśuro nā jagāma

Indeed, every other arí has come, but my father-in-law has not come. Here "every other arí" is hardly every other stranger. More likely these arí-s constitute that segment of society to which her father-in-law belongs, that it, the segment into which she could marry. The concept of arí would thus exclude both "barbarians" and members of one's own extended family. The arí is a stranger, one outside the family, but he is still a member of Vedic society.⁷

⁵Dumézil's criticisms were first presented in RHR CXXIV (1941): 36ff. and then repeated in *Le troisième souverain* (1949). Thieme briefly replied in ZDMG CVII (1957): 96ff. and at greater length in *Mitra and Aryaman* (1957), to which Dumézil again replied in JA CCXLVI (1958): 67ff. and JA CCXLVII (1959): 171ff., repeated, in condensed form, in *L'ideologie tripartite des Indo-Européens* (1958). For a useful and succinct summary of Dumézil's final views on this subject, see JMS I (1976): 30ff.

⁶Dumézil 1941: 47; 1949: 115f.

⁷Cf. Banerjea 1963: 4f., in which arí is defined as "an exogamous group" or a member of such a group, partly on the basis of this verse.

That the arí is not a member of the family, or perhaps even of one's immediate community, is important in another verse, in which Dumézil overstates the affinity between the poet and the arí:

IX 79.3ab utá sváśyā árātyā arír hí śá
 utānyáśyā árātyā vṛko hí śáh

Dumézil (1941: 49f; 1949: 118) rightly criticizes Thieme's translation for wrecking havoc with the word order: "[Schütze] vor eigener, vor anderer (i.e. vor jeglicher) árāti; sie (oder: das, was die árāti ist) ist ja der Fremdling (der den Frieden bedroht), sie ist ja der Wolf."⁸ But Dumézil's interpretation--that arí is "our own," as opposed to "others" who are the real strangers--is likewise impossible, for, as Specht (1944: 46) rightly points out, svá is properly used of members of one's extended family and as such cannot but contrast to arí if Thieme's exegesis has any validity at all. Thus, the verse must contain an oxymoron: "(Protect us) from the hostility of one of our own, for he (becomes) an alien [lit. 'another']; from the hostility of another, for he (becomes) a wolf." There is an intentional ambiguity in line a. The poet says that a member of the family that becomes hostile to the family excludes himself from it; he becomes an alien, a "stranger" to that family.⁹ He is contrasted to the

⁸Gershevitch (1959b: 955), alive to the criticisms of Dumézil, proposed another interpretation designed to preserve Thieme's hypothesis. He interprets the "wolf" in line b as a real animal and not a person who deserves to be called a wolf. "The contrast," he says, "will then be between ferocious animals on the one hand... and enemies belonging to one's own, human, kind on the other...." But this does not avoid the problem of the meaning of svá and goes against the usual meaning of vṛka in the RV.

⁹Cf. Y 46.1ab, in which Zarathuštra laments that he has been excluded from his family: kam nēmōi zam kuṛā nēmōi ayenī, pairī x^{va}ētōuš airyamanascā dadaitī "To what land to flee? Where shall I go to flee? They exclude (me) from my family and from my people." For Avestan airyaman, see below.

hostile outsider who is characterized as a wolf because his habits, like the wolf's, are unknown and unpredictable.

This important point, that the arí is always an outsider, should be obvious from Thieme's exposition, but it becomes lost in Dumézil's discussion of arí. It is true he begins his interpretation with a quite adequate formulation, stating that arí designates those who "tout en étant étrangers au groupe social restreint auquel appartient le poète ou le sacrifiant, ont mêmes dieux et mêmes cultes que lui."¹⁰ But Dumézil shifts his ground in the course of his argument and eventually comes to define arí as "l'ensemble des aryens," "l'aryen moyen," or "l'aryen type."¹¹ Thieme (1957b: 97) quite rightly objects that this latter formulation is nothing like that established by him and would require a completely new evaluation of the evidence.¹² I stress this point because it is unfortunately this "second" definition of arí which leads Dumézil to his interpretation of arya as "appartenant au monde aryen," "protecteur du monde aryen."¹³ Since the formulation on which this explanation is based is wrong, this

¹⁰Dumézil 1941: 42; 1949: 109.

¹¹Dumézil 1941: 46; 1949: 114. Cf. also Benveniste (1969 I: 372), who, although seeing clearly that the arí "forment l'autre noitié d'une société exogamique" fails to emphasize that the arí is an outsider in his initial definition of arí as a term which "designé un homme du même peuple que celui qui parle de lui."

¹²Furthermore, the results of this hypothesis are grotesque in context. Consider translating VIII 65.9 viśvāṇ aryó vipāścīto, āti khyas tūyam āgahi, asmé dhehi śrávo bṛhāt as "Overlook all those poets of the aryan community. Come hither swiftly. Create lofty fame for us." Presumably, if the god did overlook all the poets of the aryas, he would overlook the speaker as well.

¹³Dumézil 1941: 52; 1949: 121.

definition itself cannot be right.¹⁴

What then would be the expected meaning of arya? An adjective of this type might express almost any relationship with its noun base. Thus, arya could describe a person or an object which belongs to an arí or affects an arí in some way. Or it could characterize a person who manifests the quality of an arí. If an arí is "another,"¹⁵ that is, one like us, but not a member of our immediate family or community, a "stranger," who nonetheless shares our customs and culture, then arya might be "belonging to the other" or "protecting the other" or "characterized by the qualities of another (like us)."¹⁶ In the last case, the best translation is perhaps "civilized" or "civilizing," by which I mean adhering to or upholding to the rites and customs of the Vedic peoples. The only way to decide which of these meanings the word actually has is to study the contexts in which it appears.

At least once, arya does mean simply "belonging to the arí:"

¹⁴Laroche (1960: 126ff.) tries to support Dumézil's conception of arí as designating "one who belongs to an exclusive social group" by linking it to Hittite *āra/i (<a-a-ra), ara and arawa. According to him, the three words are all related: *āra/i is originally "belonging to the social group, national," whence it actually means in the texts, "just, proper;" ara, originally "a person belonging to a social group," whence "comrade, friend;" arawa, originally "he who has the characteristics of an ara, whence "noble, free." But it is uncertain, first of all, that arawa is really derived from ara. Their actual meanings in the texts are not very similar, and the formative -wa is rare in Hittite. More importantly, the stem *āra/i, which Laroche compares to arí, is based on an incorrect normalization of the graph a-a-ra-, which Goetze (1968: 17f.) shows is to be normalized *araya. As such, a-a-ra- can have nothing to do with either of the other two words. (My thanks to G. Beckman for his help in evaluating the evidence cited by Laroche.)

¹⁵I prefer "other" or "another" to Thieme's "stranger" for arí, partially because of the etymological connection of arí with Latin alius, Greek allos (cf. Specht 1944: 49) and partially because, as Thieme himself points out (1938: 38ff.), a person who is a friend or ally may also be described as an arí.

¹⁶Cf. kaví "clever man:" kavyá "characteristic of a clever man, clever."

VIII 33.14 vāhantu tvā ratheṣṭhām
ā hārayo rathayújaḥ
tiráś cid aryám sávanāni vṛtrahann
anyésām yā śatakrato

Let the bays, yoked to your chariot, convey you, the charioteer, beyond that which belongs to another, beyond the pressings which belong to others, o smasher of obstacles, o śatakratu.

Note the juxtaposition of the adjective aryám and the possessive genitive anyésām "of others." This shows that they are virtually equivalent to one another and thus helps confirm the interpretations of both arí and aryá.

In interpreting aryá in VIII 33.14 as meaning "belonging to an arí," I followed Thieme's exegesis (Thieme 1938: 78f.). In the remaining Rgvedic occurrences of aryá, however, he tries to show that the word means, for the most part, "protecting the arí" (Fremdlingsbeschützend). While this is a possible interpretation, it is less likely, I believe, than the third alternative, "civilized, civilizing." Consider, for example, X 34.13, in which Savitar is called an aryá:

X 34.13 akṣáir mā dīvyah kṛśám ít kṛśasva
vitté ramasva bahú manyamānaḥ
táttra gāvah kitava táttra jāyá
tán me ví caṣṭe savitāyám aryáh

Do not play with dice, but plow the furrow. Be content in your property, thinking much of it. There are cows, gambler; there a wife--this does the civilizing Savitar explain to me.

This is a verse from the gambler hymn, in which a man laments his past gaming through which he has lost everything. In Thieme's view (1938: 83), this disaster has turned the gambler into a homeless, wandering arí, who wins the sympathy of Savitar, a god "merciful to the stranger." But Savitar is a god who compels action, and he is here not so much comforting as

correcting the gambler. He is a god of the Vedic community and a defender of its customs and way of life, and therefore he is called aryá "civilizing."

So too in other verses in which gods are called aryá, this description reflects the gods' insistence that the principles of the culture be maintained among the Vedic peoples. Thus, Varuṇa is called aryá in VII 86:

VII 86.7c ācetayad acíto devó aryáh

The civilizing god enlightened those without understanding.

This is a lament by a man who has come under the wrath of Varuṇa and who begs that the god forgive his offense. Varuṇa is here called aryá because, like Savitar in the verse cited above, he is a teacher who knows the proper way to act and who instructs those who do not understand and follow it.

The theme of VII 86.7 is echoed in another passage in which Mitra and Varuṇa are described as aryá:

VII 65.1cd, 2a yáyor asuryām ákṣitam jyéṣṭham
vísvasya yāmann ācítā jigatnú
tá hí devánām ásurā táv aryá

... (Mitra and Varuṇa), whose lordship is most important and imperishable, as it follows on the course of everyone with understanding. Such are these lords of the gods. Such are the civilizing gods.

Line 2a is a characterization of Mitra and Varuṇa based on the preceding two lines. Because their lordship is great and imperishable the two gods are ásurā "lords." Because their rule governs the actions of everyone, they are aryá "civilizing."

In another verse, Mitra and Varuṇa are associated with a third divinity described as aryá:

VII 64.3ab mitrás tán no váruṇo devó aryáh
prá sādhiṣṭhebhīḥ pathíbhir nayantu

Then let Mitra, Varuṇa and the civilizing god lead us forth by the straightest paths.

Here the devó aryáh can only be Aryaman. Mitra, Varuṇa and the devó aryáh are summoned to guide men according to the straightest paths, which are not only those that lead to prosperity (cf. lines 3cd), but also the rtásya pánthāh "paths of truth," which represent the proper course (cf. I 41.4, 5; II 27.6; VIII 18.12).

Even referring to the gods, aryá can also have the sense of "civilized." Cf. X 43.8b yó aryápatnīr ákṛnod imā apāh "(Indra) who makes these waters to be those whose husband is civilized...." Here the poet clearly contrasts the condition of the waters after they have been released by Indra to that before, when they were dāsápatnī "those whose husband is a barbarian" (I 32.11; V 30.5; VIII 96.18). Hitherto the waters have been under the control of Vṛtra, who did not belong to the Vedic culture, but now they are under the mastery of Indra, a Vedic god.¹⁷ Indra is aryá because he recognizes and supports the ways and customs of the Vedic peoples.

Less clear is I 123.1, in which Uṣas, the Dawn, is described as aryá:

I 123.1 prthū rátho dáksināyā ayoji
 áinaṃ devāso amṛtāso asthuḥ
 kṛṣṇād úd asthād aryā víhāyās
 cíkitsantī mānuṣāya kṣáyāya

The broad wagon of the gift (dáksinā) has been yoked up. The immortal gods have mounted it. The civilized (Dawn), extending (herself), has arisen from the darkness, caring for the dwelling place of the line of Manu.

Lines ab describe the priestly gifts and the arrival of the gods on the chariot of dawn at the morning sacrifice. The attention then shifts to the

¹⁷Cf. also VII 6.5.

goddess Dawn, who emerges from the night to look benignly on the settlements. But why is Uṣas called aryá? According to Oldenberg (Noten I: 126f.), the juxtaposition of kṛṣṇā and aryá (Uṣas) recalls the opposition between the dasyus, who are described as "dark" and the āryas, who, like the bright goddess, are fair. If he is right, this verse, like X 43.8, contrasts the barbaric and the civilized.¹⁸

The sacrificial setting of the verse and the description of the dwelling places as mānuṣa, however, suggest a better explanation. The usual translation of this term is "human." But the word really means "descendent of Manu," and Manu is not the first man, but the father of the Vedic peoples.¹⁹ Because Manu and his descendants are sacrificers, they are different from and greater than the dasyus, who are ámānuṣa "not of the line of Manu" (cf. X 22.8). Thus, at the beginning and end of the verse, the poet emphasizes that a sacrifice is about to commence and that the goddess Dawn blesses the peoples who carry out the sacrifice. She and they belong to one another and form parts of a community, governed by a single set of cultural and religious norms. From the point of view of the poet, this community and its members are "civilized" because they adhere to these norms. Therefore, the goddess herself, in that she is a member of this community and in that she affirms the sacrifice by

¹⁸Thieme (1938: 82) translates aryá, as usual, by "Fremdlingbeschützend" and argues that this epithet is suggested by the reference to the dáksinā in line a. This term, he says, originally meant "Gastgeschenk" and so, since Dawn is pictured as bringing gifts of hospitality, the poet quite appropriately calls her "she who protects the stranger." But this interpretation of dáksinā is far from certain, and even if this were the original meaning, there is no indication that the poet actually recognizes it. Probably by the time of this hymn, the word had a very specific, technical meaning and suggested little more than that.

¹⁹Cf. Bergaigne 1878-83 II: 214 and Schneider 1971: 23f.

responding to it, is herself "civilized."

Like Dawn, Agni is also called aryá, and the reasons are much the same. Agni is the central god of the sacrifice, and the possession of the Vedic sacrifice, in turn, is the defining characteristic of a civilized people. Because he maintains the order and legitimacy of the sacrifice, therefore, Agni is "civilized." Unfortunately, the passages in which Agni is called aryá do not provide much context. The most informative is V 16.3:

V 16.3 asyá stóme maghónaḥ
 sakhyé vṛddhásociṣaḥ
 víśvā yásmín tuviṣváni
 sám aryé súṣmam ādadhúḥ

(We would be) in praise of him [= Agni], the generous one, and in alliance with him of fully-developed brilliance, in which aryá of mighty sound all (creatures) have placed assertive strength.

Here aryá is used because Agni is "civilized" --he will abide by the sacrificial alliance (sakhyá) that has been concluded with men. Perhaps also tuviṣván is meant in part to evoke the image of Agni as the witness to the proper worship which these men here, like all civilized men, carry out.²⁰

²⁰ Other passages provide even less contextual information. Cf. II 35.2cd apām nāpād asuryāsyā mahná, víśvāny aryó bhūvanā jajāna "The offspring of the waters [= Agni], through the greatness of his lordship, (as an) aryá begat all creatures." We note that again, as in VII 65.1, 2, a description of the god as aryá is linked to a lordship (asuryā), which maintains the principles of civilized behavior. Perhaps in II 35.2, because he is the lord who ensures the proper performance of the sacrifice, which, in turn, sustains the world, he is "civilized" and the begetter of all creatures.

The final passage in which Agni is called aryá is IV 1.7cd ananté antāḥ párivīta āgāc, chúciḥ śukró aryó rórucānaḥ "Enveloped in the endless, he has come hither, (Agni), the pure and bright, the aryá, shining." It is unclear from this passage just why Agni should be called aryá, but the verses surrounding it portray him as the lord over the sacrifice. He is the messenger (dūtá, vs. 8), who moves between heaven and earth and "Manu's kinsman in the worship" (mānuṣo yajñābandhu, vs. 9). Again, therefore, Agni may be aryá because through him the worship is maintained.

Not only gods are characterized as aryá. Humans are so described four or possibly five times in the RV. In two instances, they are called aryá because they uphold the worship, which is the mark of a civilized man. The clearer example is V 75.7:

V 75.7a-d ásvināv éhá gachataṃ
 násatyā má ví venatam
 tiráś cid aryayā pári
 vartír yātam adābhya

Ásvins, come hither! Násatyas, look not away! Seeking the civilized man, travel your course around, beyond (our rival), o you who are not to be deceived.

The gods will look for a worshipper who best offers his service in accord with the proper ritual procedures and who thus is fully civilized. The thought is similar to V 1.9ab prá adyó agne áty eṣi anyān, āvír yásmai cārutamo babhūtha "Agni, at once you go forth beyond all other (worshippers), being manifest to the one to whom you have become most dear," that is, to the one who knows how the sacrifice should be performed.²¹

In addition to these passages, others reduce the word to an honorific. That this should be so is not surprising. To call someone aryá "civilized" would be a rather easy compliment since the qualities it attributes to the person are not concrete. In any case, it is hardly more than a term of respect in VIII 1.34cd śásvatī nāry abhicákṣyāha, súbhadram arya bhójanam bibharṣi "Once observing, each wife after the other says, 'You

²¹ Similarly, Indra is invited to the worship of the aryá Ruśama Pavīru in VIII 51 (Vāl. 3).9: yasyāyām víśva áryo, dāsaḥ śevadhipā ariḥ, tiráš cid aryé rúsame páviravi, túbhyét só ajyate rayiḥ "At (the worship of) the civilized Ruśama Pavīru is this wealth consecrated for you, (wealth) surpassing (that) of which anyone here, (whether) ārya (or) dāsa, (is the) keeper, (or of which there is) another possessor." Cf. Thieme 1938: 70ff.

bear good food, sir.'" The same may be true also for V 33.9, although the verse is not very clear.^{22, 23, 24}

This brings me to the question of aryamán itself. As mentioned above, it is properly analyzed as arya-mán, which could be an abstract or a concrete noun (cf. Thieme 1957a: 78). If the meaning of arya is "civilized," then as an abstract noun aryamán could mean "civility," not in the sense of politeness, but rather as the principle on which civilization is based, or more exactly "custom," in the sense of the principle which regulates the individual mores of a people. As the name of a god, it could be the personification of custom itself or the god who presides

²² Some of the passages in which gods are described as arya may also be of this type. It is clearly so in IV 16.17, in which the poet addresses Indra as arya: IV 16.17cd ghorā yád arya sámptir bhávāty, ádha smā nas tanvò bodhī gopāh "When the conflict will become terrible, sir (arya), then become the protector of our body."

²³ In one other passage, arya is used in the compound sādhvaryā. In this verse, X 68.3, the phrase sādhvaryā atithínīh describes cows. Thieme's interpretation (1938: 86f.) of the compound as "in guter Weise (schönstens) fremdenfreundlich (gastlich)" is particularly appropriate. Nevertheless, in view of the other passages we have seen, I translate the phrase as "correctly civilized (and) hospitable." The cows bear these epithets because they are domesticated and hence a part of the community.

²⁴ The other derivatives, post-RV árya, ārya, offer no problem. The first is, as Thieme points out, a nominalization of arya with a shift in accent patterned after the vocative and is used in the sense of "householder" (vaiśya) or master (svāmin) (cf. Pāṇ. III 1.103 cited by Thieme 1938: 95 and VS XXVI 2; AV XIX 32.8; Lātyśś IV 3.5ff. etc. which are discussed by Thieme). The use of árya as a class name follows the pattern of Latin nobilis which, though it originally meant "well-known" took on a qualitative meaning "excellent" and then was used of men born into a certain class. Perhaps the term árya was used of the class of vaiśyas since, because they were closest on the social scale to the barbarians, they wished to emphasize their distinctiveness from these. It is always best to draw attention to your inferiors and emphasize your affinity with your superiors. The word ārya means "Aryan," a member of the Aryan community. The transition from "civilized" to "the civilized people" is simple.

over and protects custom.

Following the course established in the studies of mitrá and várūna, the next step would be to examine aryamán as a substantive or in those passages in which its appellative significance is implied. Unfortunately, aryamán is rarely and disputably a substantive in the RV. Perhaps, therefore, it is better to begin with Avestan airyaman, the Iranian cognate of Vedic aryamán. This word is attested quite clearly as a substantive in the Gāthās, and its meaning there might be an important clue to the meaning of aryamán.

In the Gāthās, Zarathuštra has several ways of describing the elements which make up society. He describes them physically as the dāmāna "house," the vīs "settlement," the šoiθra "province," "district" and the dahyu "land."²⁵ He also describes them societally as the xvaētu "family," the verəzəna "community" and the airyaman.²⁶ Finally, he describes them according to types of people in the terms urvaθa "ally under a commandment," brātar "brother" and p(i)tar "father."²⁷ It is clear that the smallest levels each form a series. In the "house" lives the "family" presided over by the "father." In the "settlement" lives the "community" consisting of one's "brothers," that is, those who are considered descendants of the same ancestor.²⁸

²⁵ Thus in Y 31.18, but in Y 31.16 vīs is omitted. In Y 46.4 only šoiθra and dahyu are mentioned. In the later Avesta (e.g. Vd VIII 103; Yt X 18, 87 etc.) zantu is substituted for šoiθra.

²⁶ Thus in Y 32.1, 33.3, 4. In Y 49.7 the three terms also occur, but not in coordination nor in the usual order.

²⁷ So Y 45.11. In Y 46.1, he also mentions the dahyāuš ... sāstārō "rulers of the land."

²⁸ Cf. Benveniste 1969 I: 213 on IE *bhrātēr.

The upper two levels are very much less clear, but it would appear that there is a corresponding series with both šoiθra and daíyu. First, the term urvaθa "ally under a commandment" probably refers to those who are subjects of the daíyēuš ... sāstārō "rulers of the land" mentioned in Y 46.1 and therefore belongs with daíyu "land" at the most general level. If so, then we have the series: in the "land" live the "allies under a commandment" presided over by the "rulers of the land." But a societal term is still missing. It is possible that this missing term is airyaman, but if so, then šoiθra "province, district" is left without any corresponding terms. Further, there is another word which describes exactly the kind of social unit which ought to be included in a series with "land," "allies," and "rulers." This is xšaθra "rule," in the sense of the totality of the subjects under the power of the king.²⁹

If land, rule, ally and ruler constitute the fourth and most general series, then the truncated third series must be: in the "province" (šoiθra) lives the airyaman. The airyaman would thus represent that segment of society which is greater than the community but which is smaller than the total population of the land. If the total population includes different peoples, that is, tribes which have different customs, then airyaman could describe that segment of society which I have suggested is composed of the arí. It is the totality of "others" who share the same customs but who are not part of one's extended family. It is the "civilized community."³⁰

²⁹Cf. Y 48.10, in which dušxšaθrā daíyunam "the evil rulers of the lands" refers to daíyēuš sāstārō who govern cruelly. This juxtaposition of xšaθra with daíyu and sāstar indicates that this term might be taken in series with these two.

³⁰This analysis is an extension of that proposed by Thieme (1957a: (contd.))

In the *R̥gveda*, aryamán is not a designation for a social unit as is gAv. airyaman. I believe, however, there is one instance of aryamán as a noun meaning "custom." This meaning, of course, was not only predicted by the analysis of aryamán, but is also quite compatible with gAv. airyaman, which could designate those who adhere to custom. The passage is V 29.1:

V 29.1 try àryamá mánuṣo devátātā
 trí rocanā divyā dhārayanta
 árcanti tvā marútaḥ pūtádaḥśās
 tvám eṣām řsir indrásī dhíraḥ

As Thieme (1957a: 78f.) has already argued, aryamá in line a must be neuter plural. Not only might an abstract aryamán be neuter as well as masculine, but also a parallel to this verse supports Thieme's interpretation: II 27.8ab tisró bhūmīr dhārayan tríñr utá dyūn, tríñi vratā vidáthe antár eṣām "They supported the three earths and the three heavens. (They supported) their three commandments in the ceremony." Comparing II 27.8, I translate V 29.1 as "They supported the three customs in Manu's service to the gods (and) the three heavenly realms of light. The Maruts, whose skill is pure, praise you; you, Indra, are the wise řsi of these." In II 27.8, the Ādityas are described first as sustaining the cosmos and second as upholding the correct performance of the ritual. In V 29.1ab,

79f.). Earlier Benveniste (1932: 124ff.) sought to show that the series nmāna, vīs, zantu was identical to that of xvaētu, vərəzāna, airyaman. Rejecting this view, Thieme held that the relation is that in the nmāna lives the xvaētu, etc. According to Thieme, airyaman is thus the "hospitality," that is: "those with whom one is connected by hospitality." In his more recent study of Indo-European institutions, Benveniste (1969 I: 373) has reversed his position and interpreted airyaman as "d'esprit arya." In the *Gāthās*, he says, the word is used as a substantive which designates "le membre de la confrérie religieuse."

however, this order is reversed. Here the three customs in a correspond to the three commandments which order the ritual in II 27.8b. This shows that Thieme's interpretation of the try àryamā as the "three hospitalities" is not correct. Like vratā, aryamān should have the sense of that which governs the ritual. Possibly they both refer to the ordinances which prescribe the three pressings of the soma during the sacrificial day. These ordinances could be viewed either as "commandments," as they are in II 27.8, or as "customs," which have always been followed by Vedic sacrificers, as they are in V 29.1.

Also attested once in the RV is aryamān as the designation of a person, apparently a kind of ally:

X 117.6 mógham ánnam vindate ápracetāh
 satyām bravīmi vadhā ít sá tāsya
 nāryamānam púsyati nó sakhāyam
 kévalāgho bhavati kevalādī

He who lacks perception has his food in vain. I speak the truth: a murderous weapon (will be waiting) for him. If he prospers neither an aryamān nor a comrade, eating alone he becomes one who bears his troubles alone.

The juxtaposition of aryamān and sákhi "comrade" confirms that the aryamān must be a person. Although the passage does not tell us much about this person, on the analogy of mitrá "alliance, ally" we might translate aryamān here as "ally by custom" or perhaps simply "countryman."³¹ The word probably refers to a man who has the same customs, is part of the same society, and therefore is a natural person to help or to turn to for help. The poet is warning his hearers to cultivate such relationships because there may come a time when they are needed.

³¹I mean "countryman" in a cultural, not a political sense. As pointed out above, different peoples may live under one political power.

This interpretation of aryamān in X 117.6 is substantiated by the later Veda, in which it is used in similar contexts. Thus, it complements saṃvid "ally (by covenant)" in AV III 5.5cd yáthāhám úttaró 'sāny, aryamā utá saṃvidah " ... so that I shall be the superior of (my) countryman and of (my) ally (by covenant)." Both an aryamān and a saṃvid are allies, but both are mentioned because they are allies of different sorts. The saṃvid is an ally, even a foreign ally, to whom a person is formally committed through an agreement or a covenant; whereas the aryamān is an ally because he shares one's way of life and a common background. As the verse makes clear, however, such alliances do not exclude competition. A person may still strive to be the more important or powerful member of an alliance.

Finally, aryamān in this sense also occurs in ŚB V 3.5.9 aryamné svāhēti tād enam asyá sārvasyāryamānam karoti "'To Aryaman svāhā!' -- (saying this) he thus makes him the aryamān of everything here." By becoming an aryamān, an ally, a fellow citizen, to every creature, the sacrificer is able to count on the support of these other beings. This passage parallels those in which the sacrificer is said to become a mitrá to all other beings. It suggests, therefore, that aryamān, like mitrá, is fundamentally a person with whom one maintains a mutually beneficial relationship. Here, however, there is no indication of the exact nature of that relationship.

With these passages belongs one other from the Avesta. In Y 54.1, the Ā.Airyēma.Iśyō prayer, airyaman also refers to an ally, though other interpreters have taken it as the name of the god Airyaman. However, the prayer makes much better sense if airyaman is a person, not a god:

Y 54.1 ā airyāmā išyō rafəōrāi jantū
nərəbyas cā nāiribyas cā zaraəustrahē
vanhəuš rafəōrāi manəhō yā daēnā vairīm
hanāt
mīždəm ašahyā yāsā ašim yam išyam ahurō
masatā mazdā

Let (a) worthy airyaman come hither for the support of men and women of Zarathuštra (and) for the support of good thinking, a conception which will win the desirable reward of truth. I entreat for that worthy allotment which the Wise Lord will apportion.

Y 54.2 airyamanəm išim yazamaide amavantəm
vərəərajanəm
viṭbaəsəṇhəm mazištəm ašahe sravanham ...

We worship the worthy Airyaman, the mighty, who smashes obstacles, who fights against hostilities, the greatest one of those who possess the words of truth.

The prayer itself, which constitutes vs. 1, is written in the diction of Zarathuštra and may have been composed by some member of his immediate circle or even by the prophet himself. If so, the word airyaman in vs. 1 must be understood not as the name of a god but in its appellative sense, for the worship of a god Airyaman is excluded in the message and reform of Zarathuštra. What then could the sense of the word be? The only clues are the epithet išya and the object of the prayer: the hope for support. According to Bthlm., išya is attested three times in the Gāthās (Y 32.16; 48.8; 51.17) and then numerous times in the young Avesta where it is always an epithet of Airyaman.³² The use of išya as an epithet of Airyaman is based on this prayer and the tendency in later Zoroastrianism

³²E.g. Vd XXII 9, 19, 23; Vr II 10 etc.

to give every important divinity an epithet.³³ For any guidance, therefore, we must turn back to the Gāthās. Of the three passages cited by Bthlm., only one actually attests this adjective. In Y 51.17, išyam is probably from a noun stem išyā "power" derived from the root iš "be powerful," and išya in Y 48.8 is a verbal adjective to the root iš "send."³⁴ This leaves only Y 32.16:

Y 32.16bc xšayās mazdā ahurā
yehyā mā aiθiścīṭ dvaēθā
hyaṭ aēnaṇhē drəgvatō
əəānū išyēng aṇhayā

Wise lord, (may I) have mastery over each person whose threat is surely inimical to me, if I am to capture the deceitful for their harm against the worthy.

Here the "worthy" ones contrast with the "deceitful" ones, and therefore they are equivalent to the "truthful" (ašavan),³⁵ who are those committed to best thinking (Y 32.11) and who abide by the commandments of the Wise Lord (Y 30.11). To be "worthy" (išya), therefore, implies a loyalty to the principles and people to whom a person is committed.

Thus, in Y 54.1, perhaps the airyaman is išya because he can be depended upon. And because he is dependable, it is he who is summoned "for support" (rafəōrāi) both for Zarathuštra's adherents and for the principles the prophet represents. To all appearances, therefore, the airyaman is a kind of ally, who would be expected to respond to the pleas

³³Thus aša, which is occasionally called "best" (vahišta) in the Gāthās (e.g. Y 28.8; 35.5; 37.4; 41.1) becomes regularly aša vahišta, and similarly xšaθra, which is characterized as "good" (vairya) in Y 51.1 eventually becomes xšaθra vairya.

³⁴Cf. the translations of these two verses in Insler 1975: 93, 107.

³⁵Y 43.8; Y 47.4; 33.2f. etc.

of his ally. He is like the person referred to in RV X 117.6, AV III 5.5, and ŚB V 3.5.9, for in those passages, as here, though he may not be formally allied, his interests are kindred to the speakers. Hence, Y 54.1 is not calling upon a god Airyaman, but probably a human ally--or possibly one of the Aməša Spəntas in the role of such an ally--who will come to aid the Zarathuštrian community. If so, then Y 54.2 must be a later addition to the prayer, since there a god Airyaman is invoked.

To recapitulate, then, the analysis of aryamán suggests that the appellative sense of the word was "custom" or the like. Study of the substantives airyaman in the early Avesta and aryamán in the Vedic literature confirmed that view. In the Gāthās, airyaman is the designation of a social unit, probably the community which shares a set of customs. In the Ā.Airyāmā.Iśyō prayer and at least three times in the Veda, airyaman/aryamán is a person, probably a "countryman" or a "natural" ally because he shares the same customs. Finally, the word appears in one Ṛgvedic passage as an abstract, where it probably means "custom."

Aryaman

If aryamán means "custom," then, just as Mitra is the god of alliances and Varuṇa is the god of commandments, Aryaman must be the god of customs. This interpretation of Aryaman is supported by his role and functions in the RV. The god of customs ought to be a protector of Vedic society and those who act in accordance with the principles which define that society. Just so, Aryaman, like Mitra and Varuṇa, punishes the misdeeds of men. In at least two verses, Aryaman is explicitly called

an avenger:

I 167.8ab pānti mitrávárūṇāv avadyác
 cáyata im aryamó ápraśastān

Mitra, Varuṇa, (and Aryaman) protect from the shameful deed. Aryaman avenges those who are not fit for praise.

VII 60.5ab imé cetáro áṇṛtasya bhúrér
 mitró aryamá várūṇo hí sánti

These are the avengers of great untruth, for they are Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa.

The conjunction hí suggests that line b is the explanation for line a. If so, then the names of the three gods retain their appellative meanings. Thus, the verse could translate as: "These are the avengers of great untruth, for they are the gods of alliances, customs and commandments." Because they represent these principles, they must punish those who are dishonest to them.

The same theme also appears in VII 36.4, though the verse presents several problems:

VII 36.4 girá yá etá yunájad dhári ta
 índra priyá suráthā sūra dhāyū
 prá yó manyūm rírikṣato mināty
 á sukrátum aryamāṇam vavṛtyām

(Like a poet) who, with a song, will yoke these, your two dear bays, Indra, which are eager to run and good at the chariot, o hero, (so) would I turn hither the god of customs (aryamán), who extinguishes the pride of him who seeks to do injury.

Renou (EVP V: 41f.) correctly follows Sāyaṇa in understanding "a man" as the subject of lines ab. The resulting idea that the gods are brought to the worship through the hymns is frequent in the RV; cf. V 52.13cd

tám r̥ṣe mārutaṃ gaṇám, namasyā ramáyā girā "Do homage to the host of Maruts, ṛṣi, (and) delight them with your song" and VII 32.20c ā va índram purūhutaṃ name girā "For you I turn hither Indra, who is summoned by many, with my song." In VII 36.4, the singer "yokes up" the team of Indra, for Indra prepares to come to the worship when he is aroused by the poet's song. The problem posed by the verse is the reference to a god called aryamán in the last line. It makes very little sense for the god Aryaman to appear suddenly when the poet is summoning Indra. The only reasonable solution is that aryamán must here describe Indra. And why not? Varuṇa is called devó aryáh, the "civilizing god" in VII 86.7 and aryamán must have meaning similar to devó aryáh. In the case of VII 36.4, Indra bears this name because he opposes those who attack their countrymen, with whom they should be at peace.

Indra is called aryamán in one other passage as well:

I 174.6abc jaḡhanvāñ indra mitrérūñ
codápravṛddho harivo ádāsūn
prá yé páśyann aryamānaṃ sácāyóḥ

When you, Indra, smashed the Mitrerus, when you, raised by the Codas, o master of the bays, (smashed) those who did not serve (the gods), those who saw (you then as) the god of customs (coming) with the two (horses)....

Oldenberg (Noten I: 174) reads sácāyóḥ as sácā ayóḥ against the Pp's analysis sácā āyóḥ (followed by Geldner RVÜ I: 253) and understands by ayóḥ Mitra and Varuṇa. But, as Geldner notes, the introduction of Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman into this story is quite inexplicable. On the other hand, Oldenberg's analysis of sácāyóḥ is clearly correct, since it must be read everywhere else as sácā ayóḥ and sácā takes the locative, not the genitive. The solution to the identity of the ayóḥ becomes transparent

if aryamán is a designation of Indra. The ayóḥ are the two bays that pull Indra's chariot. Note that he is called hárivat "master of the bays" in b, and compare also X 105.4 sácāyór índraś cárkr̥ṣa, āñ upānasáh saparyán, nadáyor vívratayoh śúra índrah "With these two, let Indra (come) here--I shall celebrate³⁶ him--serving as wagoneer, he the hero with the two stallions which have different commandments."³⁷ In I 174.6, Indra is called aryamán because he opposes those who are ádāsū, those not serving the gods, those that do not follow the Vedic customs of worship.

Since to oppose evil and to protect the good are simply two sides of the same thing, the guardian of custom also protects from evil men. Again, this is a function which Aryaman shares with Mitra and Varuṇa:

V 67.3 viśve hí viśvávedaso
váruṇo mitró aryamá
vratá padéva saścire
pānti mártyaṃ riṣáh

For all these--Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman--who acquire all things have followed their commandments like tracks. They protect the mortal from harm.

The verse expresses two complementary notions. The three gods pursue obedience to their commandments, and they provide safety to those who offer such obedience.

³⁶The accent on cárkr̥ṣe shows that it must be taken as a separate statement. Words of the type stuṣe, gr̥ṇiṣe, etc. are 1 sgl., not 3 sgl.

³⁷I believe vívrata means that the horses of Indra have different commandments than other horses because of their great master and because of their own special capabilities. The suggestion of Thieme (1959: 149f.) that the compound is formed not with ví "asunder" but the stem ví "bird" is possible.

This latter idea is expressly stated also in I 136.5 and X 61.17:

I 136.5def tām aryamābhī rakṣaty
rjūyāntam ānu vratām
ukthāir yā enoḥ paribhūṣati vratām

Aryaman guards him who acts honestly in accordance with the commandment (of Mitra and Varuṇa) and who endeavors through his hymns (to fulfill) the commandment of these two.

X 61.17cd sām yān mitrāvaruṇā vṛñjā ukthāir
jyēṣṭhebhīr aryamāṇam vārūthaiḥ

... when, through his hymns, he turns to himself Mitra and Varuṇa, also Aryaman, (who comes) with his most mighty protections.

In both these passages, it is the particular responsibility of Aryaman to guard those who honor Mitra and Varuṇa.³⁸

The god also appears with Mitra and Varuṇa as a bringer of rain, although the only clear example is I 79.3cd aryamā mitró vārūṇaḥ párijmā, tvācam prñcānty úparasya yónau "Aryaman, Mitra and Varuṇa, the universal one, sprinkle the skin (of the earth, which is) in the lap of the lower (aerial realm)." However, I interpret one other passage as also illustrating this activity:

V 54.8abc niyútvento grāmajīto yáthā náro
'ryamāṇo ná marútaḥ kabandhínāḥ
pínvānty útsam yád ināso ásvāran

As soldiers with teams of horses overcoming other bands, like (Varuṇa, Mitra and) Aryaman, the Maruts swell the spring with buckets (of water), when they the swift ones have sounded.

The basis for the comparison of Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman with the Maruts

³⁸Compare also V 46.5cd in which Varuṇa, Mitra and Aryaman are invoked to give "protection" (varūthyā). Similarly, the path of Aryaman (I 105.6) or of all three Ādityas (e.g. I 105.16; II 27.6) is the path of truth (cf. VIII 31.12), which is made safe and easy for the righteous man through the protection of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

is that they all bring rain. This reading depends, of course, on the interpretation of the plural aryamāṇaḥ, which I have taken to mean "Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman." This translation follows the argument of Bergaigne (1884: 193),³⁹ who held that the passage is exactly parallel to VII 38.4 where mitrá in the plural stands for Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman.⁴⁰

However, there is one other possibility. Varuṇa is called the devó aryāḥ (VII 86.7) because he can function as a protector of custom and even Indra is called aryamān when he acts as the guardian of custom (VII 36.4). Since aryamān can be an epithet, it could apply not just to a single god but to Mitra and Varuṇa as well. Perhaps the idea is that by sending rain, Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman are all "aryamān-s," all protectors of custom, for they thus prevent the disintegration of society. As long as people prosper, adherence to customary ways will be maintained.⁴¹

In addition to these passages, in which Aryaman governs human behavior along with Mitra and Varuṇa, others show his distinctive character as the god of customs more clearly. These mainly involve Aryaman's rule over the life and prosperity of the household, for where else would the power of custom be more strongly felt? The organization of the family is certainly not established through principles of social organization like treaties or

³⁹So also Renou EVP X: 30.

⁴⁰Geldner (RVÜ II: 61f.) considered this a possibility, but translated the passage in accord with his belief that aryamān could mean "patron" (Gönnern). So also Thieme (1957a: 81) translates, "... like the hospitable ones (hospitable householders who refresh the stranger)."

⁴¹Cf. ŚB XI 1.6.24 dhármo vā āpaḥ "In truth the waters are the dhárma," for, the text goes on to explain, "whenever the waters come to this world, everything here comes to be in accordance with dhárma; but whenever there is drought, then the stronger seizes upon the weaker."

commandments. Rather, it is maintained in accord with the traditions of Vedic custom and through the authority of the head of the household, who draws that authority from the traditional family structure.

It is at the time of marriage that the importance of custom receives greatest attention. The reason is simple: the wedding marks the beginning of a new household and the acceptance of a new individual into the family. Then is the time to accent custom, which will constitute the basis for that household and will dictate the new wife's commitments to the members of the groom's family.

The significance of custom in the marriage explains why the marriage fire is called the fire of Aryaman. The bride-to-be walks around this fire during the prenuptial ceremony, according to both the RV and the AV:

AV XIV 1.39cd aryamno agnim páry etu pūṣan
prātikṣante śváśuro devāraś ca

Let her (i.e. the bride) circle the fire of Aryaman, o Pūṣan. Her father-in-law and her brother-in-law await (this).

Similar also is RV V 3.2:

V 3.2 tvám aryamā bhavasi yāt kanīnām
nāma svadhāvan gúhyam bibharṣi
añjānti mitrām súdhitam ná góbhīr
yād dámpatī sámanasā kṛnóṣi

You, (Agni), become Aryaman when you belong to the young maidens. You bear (this) secret name, o independent one. They anoint you with milk like a well-established mediator when you make the husband and wife of one mind.

The fire of this verse is the household fire as the guardian of the order and well-being of the household. In walking around it, the bride commits herself to this household and to the obligations of a wife in accordance with the customary family structure. This interpretation of the agni-

pradakṣiṇā is stated in ĀpGS V 3.8 aryamānam nú devām kanyā agnim ayakṣata/sá imām devó adhvarāḥ prétó muñcāti nāmútaḥ subaddhām amútas karat "The girls have worshipped now the fire (as) the god Aryaman. The heavenly ceremony will release her from here [the household of her youth] (but) not from there [the household of her future husband]. It shall make her well-bound there."⁴²

From the point of view of the groom, custom does not so much dictate his commitments as it does ensure that the household which he will lead will be well-organized and prosperous. This difference between bride and groom appears in the following verse of the Rgvedic wedding hymn, X 85, when the groom says:

X 85.23cd sám aryamā sám bhágo no ninīyāt
sám jaspatyām suyāmam astu devāḥ

Aryaman should unite us and Bhaga as well. Let the lordship over our family be of easy mastery, o gods.

The prayer of the groom is that his wife and his family will be obedient to him and honor him as head of the household. So also in the same hymn the groom tells his bride that she has been given to him to be her lord and master: X 85.36cd bhágo aryamā savitā púraṇdhīr, máhyaṃ tvādur
gārhapatyāya devāḥ "Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitar and Puraṇdhi--these gods have given you to me that I be lord over my household."

If a household is structured according to the authority of custom and the members of that household adhere to that order, then the house-

⁴²So also cf. AV XIV 1.17, aryamānam yajāmahe, subandhūm pativédanam, urvārukām iva bāndhanāt, prétó muñcāmi nāmútaḥ "We worship Aryaman, who gives good kinship, who finds a husband. Like a cucumber from its stem, I release (you) from here, not from there." Here again, Aryaman presides over the transference of the bride's obligations from her own family to that of her husband. He is called subandhú "of good kinship" because he presides over a wedding that gives a woman her new family and because he will continue to protect these new relationships.

hold will surely flourish. For this reason, Aryaman becomes one of the gods who guarantees the prosperity of the household. In the same wedding hymn, therefore, he is invoked for the longevity of the family:

X 85.43ab ā naḥ prajā́m janayatu prajā́patir
 ājarasā́ya sám anaktv aryamā́

Let the lord of offspring⁴³ cause offspring to be born for us. Let Aryaman ceremoniously unite us for agelessness.⁴⁴

Line b expresses essentially the same thought as line a: The groom asks that Aryaman grant him a union which will produce children.⁴⁵ The "agelessness" for which the poet asks in line b is the immortality which a person achieves through his children. This idea that Aryaman brings success to the marriage also occurs in VII 35.2d sām no aryamā́ purujā́to astu "Let Aryaman who brings many offspring be ours for (our) well-being." Compare AV I 11.1, in which Aryaman appears in a ritual for help in a difficult childbirth.

Another property of the prospering household is that there will be sufficient food for the family and other dependents. Aryaman, therefore, becomes a god which nourishes the family. Thus, for example, are VI 48.14c aryamāṇam ná mandráṁ sṛprábhajasam "[I praise Indra who is] like Aryaman, pleasing and bringing fatty good;" II 1.4c tvám aryamā́ sátpatir yá́sya sambhújam "You, (Agni), are Aryaman, the lord of the household, whose

⁴³Here prajā́pati is probably an epithet of Aryaman. Cf. IV 53.2 in which it is an epithet of Savitar.

⁴⁴ājarasā́ "agelessness," so Thieme 1938: 125 n.2.

⁴⁵The responsibility of Aryaman to bring children is also stated in AV XIV 2.13, (although here, as in the AV generally, Prajā́pati has emerged as an independent deity): lines cd tām aryamā́ bhāgo aśvínobhā, prajā́patih prajā́yā vardhayantu "Let Aryaman, Bhaga, both Aśvins, and Prajā́pati cause (the bride) to increase with offspring."

food (we share),"⁴⁶ and VI 50.1c abhikṣadām aryamāṇam suśévam "[I summon] Aryaman, the very kind one, who gives that unbegged for." Thieme believes these verses show Aryaman as a god of hospitality, for Aryaman, he says, is the perfect host who is always ready to offer food for the hungry guest. However, nothing in these passages suggests that the speaker is turning as a guest to his host. Indeed, when gods are called sátpati, as is Aryaman in II 1.4c, they are the lords of the speaker's own household, not that of a stranger.⁴⁷

Similarly, the first two lines of X 68.2 probably also imply that custom repays those who adhere to it.

X 68.2abc sām góbhīr āṅgirasó náksamāṇo
 bhāga ivéd aryamāṇam nināya
 jāne mitró ná dāmpatī anakti

The Āṅgirasa (Bṛhaspati), reaching there, unites (the Āṅgiras-priests) with cows, like Bhaga (unites) Aryaman (with cows). Like a Mitra among a people, he ceremoniously unites husband and wife.⁴⁸

In line c, the union of the Āṅgirases with the cows is explicitly compared to a marriage union, and therefore, lines ab probably likewise allude to a marriage.⁴⁹ Further, Mitra in line c, is not here the god who protects alliances, but the divine Mediator, who creates an alliance. So also, in ab, Bhaga and Aryaman are not so much the gods of fortune and customs, but rather are the personifications, Fortune and Custom. To understand

⁴⁶See Thieme 1957a: 83.

⁴⁷Cf. also V 27.1, in which the poet thanks Aryaman sátpati for increasing his wealth by two oxen and a cart.

⁴⁸For the translation of this verse and the interpretation of line c, see above pp. 32f.

⁴⁹Cf. Geldner RVÜ III: 243f. and Renou EVP XV: 73.

the poet's intention, therefore, line b must be read as, "Fortune unites Custom with cows," which means that fortune follows where custom is respected. Since the reference is specifically to a marriage, the customs to be respected are those which establish a household. Note also that the term góbhiḥ has a double value. It can mean not only "with cows," but also "by milk," and therefore it might refer to an unction during the marriage ritual. If so, then lines ab allude to three acts of union: the union of the Aṅgirases with cows (compared to a wedding), the ritual union "by milk," and the union of a well-founded household with cows, the symbols of prosperity.⁵⁰

Since the role of Aryaman is so great in the establishment of a new household, he is quite naturally invoked as a power which will help bring about marriages. In the AV, there is a short hymn, AV VI 60, which was originally used in a rite for finding a husband for a single woman (cf. KauśS XXXIV 22):

AV VI 60.1 ayám ā yāty aryamā
 purástād víṣitastupaḥ
 asyā ichánn agrúvai pátim
 utá jāyám ajānaye

Hither now drives Aryaman, with top-knot loosened in front, seeking a husband for this virgin and a wife for the wifeless man.

AV VI 60.2 ásramad iyám aryamann
 anyāsām sámanam yatí
 aṅgó nv aryamann asyā
 anyāḥ sámanam áyati

⁵⁰ Since the household that is under the control of Aryaman is a household that prospers, it is no wonder that the poet seeks to enlist the god's help. Such is the case also in X 40.12d priyā aryamno dúryāṇ aśīmahi "As his friends, we would attain the dwelling places of Aryaman." These dwelling places are simply homes which are governed by custom and so protected by the god of customs.

She, o Aryaman, has become wearied, going to the (wedding-) assembly of others. Will another come to her (wedding-) assembly, Aryaman?

AV VI 60.3 dhātā dādhāra prthivīm
 dhātā dyām utá sūryam
 dhātāsyā agrúvai pátim
 dādhātu pratikāmyām

The establisher upholds the earth. The establisher (upholds) heaven and the sun. Let the establisher assign a husband to this virgin, according to her wish.

There is no doubt, in view of the preceding verses, that Aryaman is the "establisher" of the last verse. This represents another example of the attribution of a cosmic function to a god in order to substantiate an analogous power in the human realm. In this instance, since Aryaman has given heaven and earth their proper places, he is surely able to give this woman her proper place as a wife.⁵¹

Summary

The study of Aryaman began by an examination of the meanings of arí and arya, from which the word aryamán is derived. Thieme (1938) showed quite correctly that arí designates a stranger, but I do not think that an arí is any stranger. Rather, he is another member of the same society and culture as the Vedic poets. He is not a member of one's own extended family or community, but he is also not a "barbarian," someone outside Vedic society altogether. The term arya is an adjective derived from arí and describes someone who shares in the Vedic culture, someone who is "civilized" or "civilizing." The word is often applied to gods insofar

⁵¹ Compare also AV II 36.2 in which the rite for the finding of a husband is performed "in accordance with the truth of the god Establisher (dhātúr devasya satyena)"

as they manifest and uphold the principles to which a member of the "civilized" society must adhere. According to VII 64.3, Aryaman himself is such a "civilizing god." Applied to men, arya refers to someone who adheres to custom, who is "civilized" himself. In some instances, however, the employment of arya is not so clear and while the meaning "civilized" is possible, it may simply be a term of respect.

The word aryamán itself is built from arya plus the suffix -man-. If arya means "civilized," then aryaman might mean "civility" or better, "custom," the principle which defines "civility" and which governs "civilization." This interpretation of Vedic aryamán is compatible with the meaning of airyaman in the Gāthās of Zarathuštra. In that text, airyaman designates the group of people governed by a common set of customs. It constitutes "one's own people" beyond the members of one's family and community. Once elsewhere in the Avesta and at least three times in the Veda, airyaman/aryamán refers to a person, perhaps a "countryman," analogously because he shares the same customs. Finally, in one R̥gvedic passage, it probably means "custom."

The god Aryaman, therefore, ought to be the god of customs, the "civilizing" god who protects customs. This interpretation is borne out by his functions in the RV. Like Mitra and Varuṇa, Aryaman is the god of a principle which governs society, and so, just as Mitra and Varuṇa, Aryaman acts against those who violate those principles for which he stands and helps those obedient to them. Along with Mitra and Varuṇa, he is an avenger of misdeeds, but to those who are good, he provides protection. He too, like Mitra and Varuṇa, brings rain, perhaps because by doing so, he maintains the prosperity and hence the order of society. Elsewhere, he possesses functions not shared by Mitra and Varuṇa. In particular, he

is concerned with the life of the household, for it is in the organization and maintenance of the household that custom, and hence the god of custom, play their greatest roles. Aryaman is pre-eminent at the marriage ceremony, since that is the time when a new household is brought into being. Thus, the fire of the marriage is called Aryaman, and prayers are directed to Aryaman to make the new household orderly. If a household is maintained according to custom, then it will flourish. This notion is expressed by saying that the god of customs himself prospers the household; he brings it children, food, and good fortune. Because marriage and the founding of new households are dictated by custom, the god of customs is also invoked to help in arranging marriages in one AV hymn.

Aryaman in the Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas

As in the RV, Aryaman in the YV and the Brāhmaṇas remains a relatively minor and somewhat indistinct god.⁵² As a result, there are two major problems in attempting to describe the development of the god in the post-R̥gvedic period. First, unlike those of Mitra and Varuṇa, the characteristics of Aryaman in the young Veda are not connected with particular descriptions of the god in the RV in any obvious way. Second, because relatively few passages mention Aryaman at all, it is sometimes difficult to determine which descriptions of the god provide important evidence for a conception of Aryaman and which use the god merely as a cipher in the speculative structure of the later Veda. In terms of the number of references, for example, one of the most important characteristics of

⁵²Aryaman in the AV, as the references to that text in the preceding section indicate, is basically the same as R̥gvedic Aryaman.

Aryaman in the later Veda is that he is the god of one or both of the twin phalgunī-stars (cf. TS IV 4.10.1-2 = MS II 13.20 (165:16 - 166:1) = KS XXXIX 13 (130:7); MS I 6.9 (101:12); KS VIII 1 (83:12 - 13); TB I 1.2.4, 5.1.2; III 1.1.8). The locus for this identification is a long series in which the nakṣatra-bricks of the fire-altar are identified with different gods. The meaning of this passage is in the equation of the totality of the bricks of the altar with the gods and the heavenly bodies. The specific identifications are not important. An attempt to relate the phalgunī-stars to the character or a characteristic of Aryaman, therefore, is probably a vain one.

There are, however, a number of descriptions of Aryaman which appear to attest real, functional characteristics of the god. The most important of these is the characterization of Aryaman as the "god who gives." Thus, according to TS II 3.14.4, Aryaman is the "giver of goods" (dātā vásūnām).⁵³ And elsewhere in the YV, "He is Aryaman who gives" (KS VIII 1 (83:13) eṣo 'ryamā yo dadāti; KS XI 4 (148:4) eṣa vā aryamā yo dadāti; TS II 3.4.1 yāḥ khālu vāi dadāti sò 'ryamā), or, more succinctly, "Aryaman is giving" (MS I 6.9 (101:12); II 3.6 (34:2) dānam aryamā).⁵⁴

How has Aryaman come to be this epitome of generosity? Although this description of Aryaman is not in the RV, Thieme (1957a: 87) nonetheless suggests it is based on the fundamental character of the god in the RV. According to him, Aryaman is Hospitality personified and so quite naturally he might become the god who is supremely generous like an ideal host. There are two problems with this solution. First, according to my analysis,

⁵³Cf. KS X 13 (142:3); MS IV 12.4 (190:7).

⁵⁴Cf. TB I 1.2.4 aryamēti tām āhur yó dadāti "They call him who gives 'Aryaman.'"

Ṛgvedic Aryaman is not Hospitality, but the god of customs. Second, Thieme's approach is not entirely appropriate for the later Veda, for it derives a later identification of the god from the Ṛgvedic conception of his central character. The young Veda tends to devolve gods into sets of characteristics which do not all relate to a dominant conception of the god, or, even when there is a dominant conception, it is not necessarily that of the RV. A better procedure is to look closely at the contexts in which this identification is made, for in this way we can see how the identification functions in the Brāhmaṇic argument and then how it relates to the name and functions of the god.

Of the contexts in which Aryaman is called the god who gives, there is only one which is repeated in the different Yajurvedic texts. It is a prayer, which in the MS version, goes áthaiṣo 'ryamné cárur yó dadāti sò 'ryamā, dānam aryamā, dānakāmā asmai prajā bhavanti "Now, this caru is for Aryaman. He who gives it is aryamán. Aryaman is giving: dependents desirous of giving become his."⁵⁵ The prajāḥ are those under the control of the yajamāna (cf. Rau 1957: 54 n.2, 3) and the dāna which he seeks is the tribute which such dependents naturally owe him (cf. Rau 1957: 59). In that the sacrificer gives an offering to the god Aryaman, he becomes an aryamán. What does the text mean by this? We saw before that the word aryamán can mean "countryman" or "(natural) ally." Therefore, in calling the sacrificer an aryamán, the text says two things. First, it describes the sacrificer as the personification of the god Aryaman, and second, it establishes him as an "ally." Thus, when the text says that "aryamán is giving," it defines the character of both the god and the human aryamán.⁵⁶

⁵⁵MS II 3.6 (34:1 - 2), cf. KS XI 4 (148:3 - 5) and TS II 3.4.1 - 2.

⁵⁶Similarly, when the yājñika says in TB I 1.2.4 aryamēti tām āhur yó dadāti, he is describing the character of both the god and the man aryamán.

and it shows that the god and the human aryamán are mirror images of one another.

Having established himself as a human aryamán by the offering to the divine Aryaman, the sacrificer now reaps the benefits of being an aryamán, an "ally." He receives the support of those who owe him support: "dependents desirous of giving become his." Because he becomes an ally, his subjects become allies to him. The KS version of this prayer describes the exchange between the sacrificer and his subjects: KS XI 4 (148:3 - 5) aryamne carum nirvaped yah kāmāyeta dānakāmā me prajāś syur ity, eṣa vā aryamā yo dadāti, dānam imāḥ prajā upajīvanti, dānakāmā asmai bhavanti "He should offer a caru to Aryaman who would wish, 'May dependents, desirous of giving, be mine.'" He really is an aryamán who gives. These dependents here are in need of giving. Those desirous of giving become his." As the sacrificer becomes a generous ally, so his subjects will respond with their own generosity (cf. Caland 1908: 118 n. 320).

This use of aryamán thus resembles that of mitrá in the later Veda. However, note two points. First, though very similar, mitrá and aryamán are not quite synonymous. Insofar as the sacrificer and his dependents exchange support for one another, their relationship is like that between mitrá-s. But the relationship between aryamán-s is distinctive in that its governing principle is custom, which orders the household and community (grāma, vís) led by the sacrificer. Because it is custom which ordains that the sacrificer's dependents return support for his support, the sacrificer is an aryamán. Second, these passages also point up a similarity in the development of Vedic Mitra and Aryaman. Just as Mitra

became the image of the human mitrá, so also Aryaman becomes the image of the human aryamán. In both cases, such a conception of the god departs from that of the RV. In that text Aryaman is the god of customs, not an ally by custom, just as Mitra is the god of alliances, not an ally.

A second characteristic of the later Vedic Aryaman, which has attracted more attention than his generosity, is his identification with the sun. This identification is particularly important for the classical Indian tradition, which came to view Aryaman as primarily a name for the sun. Once again, we are on familiar ground, for Mitra too was eventually identified with the sun. The basis for both these identifications was probably established by the transformation of the word ādityá into a word for the sun during the post-Rgvedic period. Nevertheless, this fact alone does not account for the realization of this possibility in the case of Aryaman. To understand the catalyst of this development, we must again look more closely at the contexts in which it occurs.

This identification of Aryaman as the sun is not only completely absent from the RV, it is also rare even in the later Veda. In fact, there is only one passage in the YV which explicitly calls Aryaman the sun. Since this passage, which is from the TS, is so important, I will quote it at length:

TS II 3.4.1-2 aryamné carum nír vapet suvargákāmo, 'sáu vā ādityò 'ryamā, 'ryamānam evā svēna bhāgadheyēnōpa dhāvati, sá evāinaṁ suvargām lokām gamayaty. aryamné carum nír vaped yah kāmāyeta, dānakāmā me prajāś syur ity, asáu vā ādityò 'ryamā, yah khālu vai dadāti sò 'ryamā, 'ryamānam evā svēna bhāgadheyēnōpa dhāvati, sá evāsmāi dānakāmāḥ prajāḥ karoti,

ḍānakāmā asmai prajā bhavanty, aryamné carūm nír
vaped yāh kāmāyeta, svastī janātām iyām íty, asáu
vā ādityò 'ryamā, 'ryamānam evā svēna bhāgadhéyenópa
dhāvati, sá evāinaṃ tād gamayati yātra jígamisati.

He who desires heaven should offer a caru to Aryaman. Aryaman is really yonder sun (ādityá); therefore, he hastens to Aryaman with his own share, (and) he then makes him go to the heavenly realm. He should offer a caru to Aryaman who would wish, "May dependents desirous of giving be mine." Aryaman really is yonder sun; he who gives is, of course, really an aryamān. Therefore he hastens to Aryaman with his own share, (and) he makes his dependents desirous of giving to him. (His) dependents become desirous of giving to him. He should offer a caru to Aryaman who should desire, "May I go among (foreign) peoples in well-being." Aryaman is really yonder sun. He therefore hastens to Aryaman with his won share, (and) he then makes him go where he wants to go.

The first wish addressed to Aryaman--to go to heaven--makes sense as a petition to the sun, since the sun is a heavenly body. To identify Aryaman as the sun is therefore quite reasonable. In the case of the second wish--to have generous dependents--however, the identification of the sun and Aryaman is purposeless. The following statement, that he who gives is aryamān, underlines the awkwardness of that identification. The simplest explanation is that this identification is automatically repeated from the first petition and therefore, in order to understand why Aryaman is the sun, we have to look to that first petition.

Note also that these lines are a commentary on two verses found in TS II 3.14.4-5.t, u. The first verse praises Aryaman as powerful and generous and concludes with a prayer for wealth. The second petition of TS II 3.4.1-2, the one for generous dependents, makes the desire stated in that prayer more explicit. The second verse, to which the remainder of TS II 3.4.1-2 applies, reads as follows:

TS II 3.14.4-5.u yé te 'ryaman bahávo devayānāḥ
pānthānaḥ rājan divá ācāranti

tébhīr no deva máhi śárma yacha
sām na edhi dvipāde sām cātuṣpade

Your many paths which lead to the gods, o Aryaman, which come hither from heaven, o king, with these offer us great protection, o god. Be prospering for our two-footed (slaves and) for our four-footed (animals).

Lines ab, which speak of the paths which lead to heaven, are the basis for the wish for heaven in TS II 3.4.1 - 2 and provide the explanation for the identification of Aryaman with the sun in that passage. Already in the RV, we hear of the path of Aryaman (cf. I 105.6) or of the Ādityas (cf. below pp. 266ff.). In the RV, this path is the way which is in accordance with the truth (ṛtá). Here, however, as also in PB XXV 12.3, the path of Aryaman is the way along which the sacrificer ascends to the world of the gods (cf. ŚB I 9.3.2), a way which leads to the sun (cf. ŚB I 9.3.13ff.; XI 2.6.11). Once the path of Aryaman becomes this heavenly way, then the identification of Aryaman with the sun follows quite naturally.

This same process is also indicated in one other passage in which the identification of Aryaman and the sun is suggested, if not directly stated. In ŚB V 3.1.2 (= 5.1.12), a white-backed bullock is prescribed as the fee for a sacrifice to Bṛhaspati. The text then explains why the bullock must have a white back: eṣā vā ūrdhvā bṛhaspāter dík tād eṣā upāriṣṭhād aryamāṇaḥ pānthāḥ "This upper region really belongs to Bṛhaspati (and) there, on the upper part, is the path of Aryaman." That is to say, the bullock is white-backed because the back of heaven, which is the path of Aryaman, is bright. This heavenly track is bright, of course, because it is where the sun travels: the path of Aryaman is the path of the sun. The identification of Aryaman and the sun is not specifically made, but it is only one step away. Sāyaṇa's commentary, which Eggeling (1882-1900 III: 59) follows, takes this step and may be correct in doing so. In

any case, the passage shows that Aryaman became the sun through the reinterpretation of the path of Aryaman and not because of the character or functions of the god himself.

The conclusion of TS II 3.2.1-2, in which Aryaman is invoked for safety during travel in foreign lands, however, reminds us that the path of Aryaman is not only heavenly, but could still be earthly as well. As in the RV, so also in the later Veda, Aryaman serves as a protector and his paths are those of security and prosperity. Compare TS II 3.14.4 - 5. u cd or, even better, the corresponding lines in the KS version of this stanza:

KS X 13 (142:6)cd tébhir no adyá pathíbhis sugébhī
 rākṣā ca no ádhi ca brūhi deva

By these easy paths, today protect us and testify for us, o god.

Note that it is the image of the path of Aryaman which stands out and not the figure of the god. He himself is rather shadowy.

To recapitulate briefly, in the young Veda, the god Aryaman recedes in significance far below that of Varuṇa and Mitra. Indeed, no distinct conception of his character is visible at all. Thus, in those passages in which he becomes the god who gives, he is little more than a reflection of the human aryamán. In the passages studied, this aryamán is the leader of a household and a community, who supports his dependents and expects support from them in return. Elsewhere, Aryaman becomes the sun, but this identification is based on the young Vedic interpretation of the "path of Aryaman." In these texts, it becomes a path leading to heaven and to the sun or the track followed by the sun. From these conceptions, it is an

easy step to conclude that Aryaman must be the sun, and this is exactly what happens in the later tradition. In any case, I see no trace of the Ṛgvedic god of customs. In fact, there is little trace of him at all; about all that remains of Aryaman is his name.

ADITI

Aditi and Āditya

In the preceding chapters, I have tried to establish that each of the three gods Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman has a distinct character, which complements the others. Mitra, the god of alliances, governs reciprocal relationships, which involve mutual benefits and responsibilities, and he ensures that men will adhere to the pacts they conclude. Varuṇa, the god of commandments, protects the authority of a legitimate superior, and he governs human behavior. Aryaman, the god of customs, upholds traditional ways of behavior and prospers those who abide by custom. The three gods, then, have a single common character: each one of them represents a principle through which human society is ordered and governed.

As noted in the introduction, the term ādityá evidences the close relationship among the three, for while the epithet is not theirs exclusively, it is characteristic of these three gods. The question then arises: does ādityá point to their common character and, if so, is that character as I have defined it? To answer this question, I begin with the word itself and then study its use in the RV.

The interpretation of ādityá clearly depends on the meaning of áditi. First, ādityá is a secondary derivative of áditi. Second, ādityá is equivalent in meaning to the phrase "son of áditi" (putró áditeh). This equivalence is easy to demonstrate, for not only do ādityá and "son of áditi" occur in the same contexts and refer to the same gods, but they also alternate with one another even in the same hymn. Thus, in II 23, a hymn to Varuṇa, the god is called an Āditya in vss. 1 and 4, but in vs. 3, the

poet addresses Varuṇa and all the "sons of áditi." Likewise, in VII 60, the poet praises Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, calling them Ādityas in vs. 4 and "sons of áditi" in vs. 5.¹

What then is the meaning of áditi? First and most obviously, it is the name of a goddess. But like mitrá, váruṇa, and aryamán, the word might also have possessed an appellative sense understood by the Rgvedic poets. If it did have such a sense, then both the derivation of ādityá and the phrase "son of áditi" are each open to two interpretations. Ādityá might be a secondary derivative ending in -ya- with extended grade of the first syllable, which expresses patronymic or metronymic relationship, such as vainyá "offspring of Vena" and taugryá "offspring of Tugra."² But there is a second possibility. Such forms with extended grade and -ya- suffix are often secondary nouns or adjectives built to primary noun or adjective stems.³ Compare devá "god:" dáivya "godly, divine;" subhága "fortunate:" sáubhagya "good fortune;" gāṅgā "Ganges:" gāṅgyá "near the Ganges;" vadhú "woman:" vādhuyā "bridal, bridal dress;" rtvíj "ceremoniant:" ártvijya "office of a ceremoniant;" and vis "community:" vaiśya "Vaiśya." Further, while such derivatives come from a wide variety of stems, those built to i-stem nouns are especially frequent: kaví "sage:" kāvyá, kāvya "sagacious;" pāti "lord:" -patya "relating to a lord" (ksáitra-, gārha-, ádhi-, jās-patya); and sámīti "assembly:" sāmityá "relating to an assembly." Importantly, derivatives of this type are much more common than the similarly built patronymics.

¹Cf. also VIII 18, in which they are called Ādityas in vss. 1 and 2, and "sons of Aditi" in vs. 5.

²Altind. Gr. II.2 §660b, p. 822.

³Altind. Gr. II.2 §659a, p. 820.

Exactly parallel to these two interpretations of ādityā, the equivalent phrase "son of āditi" can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, it could mean that a god is the offspring of the goddess Aditi. If, however, āditi designates a principle of some sort, then putró āditeḥ could also be an expression of the type sūnúḥ sáhasaḥ, (of Agni), śávasaḥ nāpāt/sūnúḥ (of the Rbhus), or vimúco nāpāt (of Pūṣan). That is to say, the phrase putró āditeḥ could state the principle, not the parent, from which a god derives his being and character.⁴ Just as Agni is "son of strength" because he manifests strength (sáhasaḥ), so Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman could be the "sons of āditi" because they actualize or reveal āditi.

Interestingly enough, another phrase, which is undeniably of this type, is also used of Varuṇa and Mitra. This is the phrase sūnúḥ dākṣasya, "son of skill." Good or pure skill is a common attribute of the pair throughout the RV. It occurs, for example, in I 2.7ab mitráṃ huve pūtádakṣaṃ, várūṇaṃ ca riśādasam "I summon Mitra, whose skill is pure, and Varuṇa, the riśādaḥ"⁵ and I 24.7ab abudhné rájā várūṇo vánasyo, -rdhvám stūpaṃ dadate pūtádakṣaḥ "In (that space) which is without bottom, king Varuṇa will assume his lofty throne of wood, he whose skill is pure."⁶ It is the skillfulness of these gods which the poet of VIII 24 expresses by calling them "sons of skill:"

VIII 25.5 nāpātā śávaso maháḥ
 sūnúḥ dākṣasya sukrátū
 srpádānū iṣó vāstv ādhi kṣitāḥ

⁴As already suggested by Macdonell 1897: 122. Cf. also Gonda 1957a: 77.

⁵Cf. the proposal of Thieme (1938: 158) that riśādaḥ means "Sorge für den Fremdling hegend."

⁶Cf. I 2.9, 23.4, 139.2; III 62.17; V 66.4.

The two offspring of great might, the two sons of skill whose will is strong, who give gifts of fat, inhabit the dwelling places of refreshment.

They are mighty, so they are called "sons of might." They are skillful, so they are the "sons of skill."

These two interpretations of both ādityā and "son of āditi" are not mutually exclusive. If āditi does denote some principle, then the goddess Aditi would be the personification or guardian of that principle. Thus, a god who in some way is intimately connected with that principle might not only be described by an adjective derived from āditi or as the metaphorical "son of āditi," but might also be seen as the true offspring of the goddess Aditi. Again, the relationship between Mitra and Varuṇa and dākṣa "skill" illustrates these possibilities. Just as Mitra and Varuṇa are the "sons of skill," so skill -- or perhaps I should write "Skill" -- is called the father of these gods in VII 66.2ab yā dhārāyanta devāḥ, sudákṣā dākṣapitarā "(Let this praise go forth to Mitra and Varuṇa), those two of good skill, whom the gods have supported, those whose father is Skill."⁷ Next to the adjective sudákṣa "of good skill," dākṣapitar must mean that Mitra and Varuṇa are so skillful, the god Skill is surely their father.⁸ Here the metaphor has become a genealogy. In the same way, if āditi does designate an attribute or a principle, then there might be a progression from āditi as the metaphorical mother of the Ādityas to Aditi as their actual, divine mother. Whether this is actually the case entirely depends upon the meaning of āditi and the character of Aditi.

⁷Cf. Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 86f.; Gonda 1957a: 5f.

⁸To VII 66.2, compare VIII 47.6, in which Aditi is called the mother of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

áditi

The etymology of áditi offers a natural starting point for the interpretation of both the word and the goddess, for, unlike those of mitrá and várūṇa, the derivation of áditi is fairly certain. The usual analysis derives áditi from the root dā "bind" and privative a-. Therefore the word literally means "boundless" or "boundlessness," and Aditi is the goddess of "boundlessness." There are two principal interpretations of the boundlessness of Aditi. Some scholars maintained that Aditi represents boundlessness in either space or time. Thus, Roth (1852: 68) characterized the goddess Aditi as "die Ewigkeit, oder das Ewige." For Max Müller (1891: 241), "Aditi... is in reality the earliest name invented to express the visible Infinite... the endless expanse beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky." Hillebrandt, in his study of the goddess Aditi (1876: 20), the results of which he reaffirmed in his Vedische Mythologie (1927-29 II: 96), identified Aditi as "das Tageslicht in seiner Unvergänglichkeit."⁹

Over against these theories were others which emphasized the moral role of Aditi. The earliest of such theories was that of Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 88ff.; 1884: 34ff.). According to him, áditi meant "liberté," or more precisely, "l'absence de liens." In the ethical sphere, this meant freedom from sin; but for Bergaigne (1884: 36), the word designated also freedom from evil of any kind, from darkness, or from drought. Likewise Oldenberg (1917: 202ff.)¹⁰ interpreted Aditi as the personification of

⁹Cf. also the Indian tradition, already common in the young Veda and upheld for the RV by Pischel (VSt. II: 86, cf. Hillebrandt 1876: 39f.), which sees Aditi as the earth.

¹⁰Similarly, Neisser 1924: 20ff. and Geiger 1916: 248.

"Freiheit," and in particular, the freedom from the bonds of offense.^{11, 12}

By examining again the contexts in which áditi appears in the RV, it is possible to show that Bergaigne's and Oldenberg's interpretation is essentially correct. Aditi is the goddess who personifies freedom from offense and its consequences. Both rightly saw that bondage was one of the primary metaphors for the condition which offense creates. Poets pray to be "loosed" (ví śrath) from the guilt (énaḥ) which clings to men because of their own or their family's offenses (cf. IV 12.4). They fear the "fettters (pāśa) of Varuṇa," the symbol of guilt's terrible bondage, which manifests itself as pain and disease (cf. I 24.15). The opposite of such bondage is the condition of áditi, which is freedom from guilt and release from evil. Thus the goddess Aditi is herself "free" and gives "freedom."

Though such metaphors of bondage and release are living in the RV, I have chosen to translate áditi as "blamelessness" or more simply, "innocence," for although this translation loses the concrete image suggested by the word, it better excludes the idea that Aditi represents any type of freedom or boundlessness in time or space. The freedom of Aditi is

¹¹Oldenberg did, however, allow some of the naturalism of Hillebrandt to filter into his discussion of Aditi. He says, for example, "Richtig, ja selbst-verständlich ist nur zunächst dies, dass der 'Freiheit,' indem sie personifiziert und mit Varuṇa und seiner Göttergruppe verwandtschaftlich verbunden wurde, nun auch--vielleicht von Anfang an--konkrete Attribute beilegt worden sind, die der Lichtnatur wie der ordnenden Herrschernatur jener Gottheiten entsprochen, zumal die Vorstellungen von Licht und Freiheit untereinander eng verknüpft waren" (1917: 204).

¹²A third possible interpretation is isolated from the two types we have thus far discussed because it is based neither on the etymology mentioned above nor on the analysis of Rgvedic passages. This is the theory propounded by Przyluski (1934: 412f., cf. Gonda 1957a: 76), who held that Aditi is the Great Mother goddess, related to the Great Goddesses of Asia Minor. In fact, according to Przyluski, the name Aditi is related to Anaitis, who, like Aditi, rules to greater power than any other divinity.

specifically the freedom from evil deeds and their consequences and not freedom in general. Again, the best approach to the nature and function of Aditi is to study the passages in which áditi is not a proper noun but a substantive.¹³

Perhaps the clearest example of the substantive employment of áditi is the refrain of RV X 100 á sarvátātim áditiṃ vṛṇīmahe "We choose for ourselves wholeness and innocence." Geldner (RVÜ III: 313f.) interprets sarvátātim áditiṃ as a double accusative and so translates: "Wir erbitten Vollkommenheit von der Aditi." But he himself has noted the decisive objection that á vṛ is elsewhere construed with an accusative of the object and genitive of the person. We have no choice, therefore, but to translate this line with a compound predicate and áditi as a substantive. The other term, sarvátāti "wholeness," means the absence of defect or of any disabling injury. It complements áditi because áditi describes a similar condition in which a person is free from the infection of guilt that often manifests itself as disease. This prayer for "wholeness and innocence" forms the refrain of this hymn because the purpose of the hymn was to expel some affliction. Thus, in vs. 7, the poet protests that ná vo gúhā cakṛma bhūri duṣkṛtām, nāvisṭyaṃ vasavo devahélanam "We have neither done a great evil in secret against you, nor (have we done) a god-angering (act) in the open, o Vasus." He therefore exhorts the gods in the latter half of the

¹³Whether áditi is used in the RV as an adjective or a noun or only as a proper name has also been debated among various scholars from the beginnings of Vedic philology. Thus Hillebrandt (1876: 12) defended the use of áditi as an adjective meaning usually "unvergänglich," while such an employment was rejected by Bergaigne (1884: 41). Bergaigne, however, did admit a substantive employment of áditi (cf. Grassmann 1872: sp. 36f.), but this position was in turn rejected by Colinet (1893: 81ff.), who tried to demonstrate that áditi appears in the RV only as a proper noun.

verse: 7c mākir no devā áṇṛtasya várpasaḥ "(Do) not, o gods, (punish) us for the semblance of an untruth" and in 8ab ápāmīvāṃ savitā sāviṣan nyàg, váriya íd ápa sedhantv ádrayaḥ "Let Savitar cast down the disease; let the mountains repel it as far away as possible." The refrain merely echoes these twin ideas of freedom from defect and freedom from guilt.

The substantive áditi also occurs alongside its opposite díti, which is a secondary derivative of áditi. If áditi is "innocence," díti is "guilt" or "blame." The two terms occur in opposition in V 62.8:

V 62.8 á rohatho varuṇa mitra gārtam
 ātaś cakṣāthe áditiṃ dítiṃ ca

You two ascend your throne, o Varuṇa and Mitra, whence you observe innocence and guilt.

Parallels to this passage support this interpretation. For example, it is said of Varuṇa in VII 49.3b that he "looks down upon the truths and falsehoods of men" (satyāṇṛté ... jánānām) and in I 25.11 that "(From his dwelling places) he, perceiving, looks upon all unusual things, both those which have been done and which should be done" (kṛtāni yā ca kártvā). So also, in IV 1.17, the sun "watches over the straight and crooked (deeds) among mortals" (ṛjū mārteṣu vṛjinā). In each of these passages, the pairs of opposites represent the good and evil deeds that the god carefully observes. The statement in V 62.8 that Mitra and Varuṇa look upon "innocence" and "guilt" fits exactly into this pattern.¹⁴

¹⁴The only question is whether áditi and díti might be understood as adjectives rather than substantives in the passage. That is, could we translate, "you observe the innocent and the guilty?" While not impossible, this interpretation is less likely because the parallel passages just cited described the gods as watching over certain actions or certain characteristics of men. In this passage, therefore, I would expect a pair of contrasting impersonal nouns, rather than adjectives describing men.

The pair áditi/díti occurs also at IV 2.11d dítim ca rāsvāditim uruṣya. However, the translation of this line is deceptively difficult. On the surface, it would appear that áditim is the object of uruṣya "set free," but normally uruṣya is used with an accusative of the person set free.¹⁵ Though we might expect a prayer for the goddess of innocence to set men free--and indeed there is such a prayer in VIII 25.10 and 47.9 --the phrase "set free innocence" or "set free Aditi" is strange. Nonetheless, there is apparent support for this translation in I 152.6, in which other translators have understood áditi as the object of uruṣya.

I 152.6 ā dhenāvo māmāteyām āvantīr
 brahmapriyam pīpayan sāsminn ūdhan
 pitvó bhikṣeta vayúnāni vidvān
 āsāvívāsann áditim uruṣyet

Helping the son of Mamata, the cows [= the milk] have swollen the friend of the formulators [= the soma] in the same udder [= the soma bucket]. He who understands our endeavors [Agni] should partake of his food [= the oblation] with his mouth [= flames]. By trying to win innocence (for us), he would grant (us) freedom.

In my translation of this verse, I supply "us" as the object of uruṣya in accordance with the usual construction and take áditi, not as the object of uruṣya, but of āvívāsa "try to win."¹⁶ The context of lines cd makes this interpretation not only possible but very likely. The subject must be Agni. "Understanding our endeavors" elsewhere characteristically describes this god, as in I 189.1ab ágne náya supāthā rāyé asmān, víśvāni deva vayúnāni vidvān "Agni, lead us by an easy path to wealth since you understand our endeavors, o god" and VI 15.10cd sá yakṣad víśvā vayúnāni vidvān, prá havyām agnīr amṛteṣu vocat "He who understands all our endeavors

¹⁵There is an exception in I 155.2 (see Geldner RVÜ I: 213).

¹⁶Cf. Geldner (RVÜ I: 211), who takes áditi as the object both of āvívāsa and uruṣya. "Der Sinn," he says, "schwankt zwischen der Göttin und dem Abstraktbegriff."

will perform the worship. Agni will announce our oblation among the immortals." In all these verses, I 152.6, I 189.1, and VI 15.10, the intention is the same. Agni understands what men must do in the worship, and because he does, he will help bring the worship to fulfillment. In I 152.6, he helps men to succeed in the worship and therefore to discharge their responsibilities to the gods. He wins for them, as the poet says, their "innocence," for they have paid their debt to the gods. Further, insofar as he wins innocence for the worshippers, he also grants them "freedom," for the gods will not send distress to them, but will prosper and protect them. In exactly the same way, Agni frees the worshipper in VII 1.15ab séd agnīr yó vanuṣyató nipāti, sameddhāram āmhasa uruṣyāt "Agni, who protects from him who covets, will free the kindler (of the sacrificial fire) from distress." Here again, the pious man wins freedom from difficulty through the fire which he kindles for worship.

Thus, if "us" is the object of uruṣya in I 152.6, then áditi must be the object of āvívāsa. This construction parallels VI 60.11ab yá iddhā āvívāsati sumnām índrasya mártyaḥ, dyumnāya sutārā apāh "(For) the mortal who, with kindled (fire), tries to win the favor of Indra, (make) the waters easy to cross for splendour." Here the worshipper is trying to win "favor" and not "innocence," but the idea is essentially the same. Through his pious worship, a man will gain the favor of the gods--or the innocence which wins that favor--in the hope of prospering.

If áditi is not the object of uruṣya in I 152.6, then to suppose that it is in IV 2.11d would make this latter verse a completely isolated case. The entire verse is:

IV 2.11 cítim ácittim cinavaḥ ví vidvān
 prṣthéva vītá vrjinā ca mártān

rāyé ca naḥ svapatyāya deva

dītiṃ ca rāsvāditim uruṣya

The first two lines translate without difficulty as: "(Since he) knows how, (Agni) will distinguish understanding and lack of understanding like (people distinguish) the straight and crooked backs of men." That is to say, understanding and ignorance are as obvious to Agni as physical deformities are to men.

In the last two lines, dītiṃ ca ... āditim must be a locution parallel to the preceding rāyé ca ... svapatyāya, and hence a compound object dependent on a single verbal idea. I do not believe dītiṃ ca ... āditim can be divided so that dītiṃ is the object of rāsva and āditim the object of uruṣya.¹⁷ Moreover, neither rāsva "grant" nor uruṣya "set free" gives good sense as the verb governing the object phrase. How then can we interpret the line? Like cīttim ācittim, which in meaning, form, and sound so closely parallels dītiṃ ca ... āditim, the latter phrase must be the object of vī ci "distinguish." Just as in lines ab, Agni perceives understanding and its lack, so also, according to line d, he perceives the guilt and innocence of men. If we supply a form of vī ci in lines cd, then line c expresses the purpose resulting from the action described by rāsva and uruṣya. The resulting translation of the last two lines is, then: "(distinguishing) guilt and innocence, give (us wealth)¹⁸ and set (us

¹⁷As Neisser (1924: 22f.) and Renou (EVP XIII: 90) point out, there is a goddess Diti, whose name derives from dā "give." Cf. VII 15.12c dītiḥ ... dāti vāryam "Diti will give the boon." They argue that the presence of rā in this verse suggests that the dīti of our passage is this Diti. The juxtaposition of dīti with āditim here and the parallel in V 62.8, where dīti can not be from dā "give," makes this interpretation implausible.

¹⁸The implied accusative is probably rayim, cf. II 11.12; VIII 23.12, 60.11, etc. The rāyé in line c allows the ellipsis of the word in this line.

free for the sake of wealth and a good lineage for us, o god."¹⁹ That is to say, the poet asks that Agni prosper him and release him from any guilt which might hinder his own prosperity or that of his descendants.

But the occurrences of āditim as a substantive which are most revealing are those in which āditim appears alongside ānāgaḥ "offenseless."²⁰ These show that āditim belongs to the sphere of human behavior and that its meaning must be "blamelessness."

I 24.15 provides a good example of the close relationship between ānāgaḥ and āditim:

I 24.15 úd uttamám varuṇa pāsam asmád
 āvādhāmá ví madhyamám śrathāya
 áthā vayám āditya vraté távā
 -nāgasō āditaye syāma

Release from us, Varuṇa, the uppermost fetter, the middle, and the lowest (one). So now, o Āditya, under your authority, we would be without offense for the sake of innocence.

In other words, the poet acknowledges the authority of Varuṇa and says that he wants to be obedient to that authority in order to be innocent, to be free from any guilt and evil consequences through which guilt manifests itself.

The first verse of this hymn establishes that āditaye does not mean only "before the goddess Aditi," as Geldner (RVÜ I: 26) would have it, for

¹⁹The word order is somewhat peculiar. Probably āditim and rāsva have exchanged places since the former would fit before the caesura, while the latter can not.

²⁰For the meaning of āgaḥ ("offense"), see the discussion of āgaḥ and ēnaḥ below, pp. 252ff. The two points made there which are important for the discussion of āditim are, first, that an āgaḥ is an offense against a social and/or religious principle and second, that offense places a person in a state of grave danger, which can, however, be relieved through divine intervention.

here too, on one level at least, áditi must be taken in its appellative meaning: I 24.1cd kó no mahyá áditaye púnar dāt, pitāram ca drśéyam mātāram ca "Who will return us to great innocence? I would see my mother and my father." This interpretation of áditi accords with the intention of the hymn as a whole, which is a prayer to dispel the trouble caused by an offense of some sort. If the poet can be returned to the state of innocence, if he can be released from the guilt which binds him, that trouble will cease.

Additional support for the interpretation of áditi as a substantive in vs. 15 comes from the parallel use of svastāye elsewhere. Especially striking is X 36.12abc mahó agnēḥ samidhānāsya śārmany, ānāgā mitré várune svastāye, śréṣṭhe syāma savitūḥ sāvīmani "We would be under the shelter of great Agni when he is kindled, offenseless under Mitra and Varuṇa for our well-being and under the excellent compelling commandment of Savitar." Line b of this verse corresponds in virtually every respect to I 24.15cd: both poets ask to be offenseless under the authority of the gods; both use the dative to express the end they wish to achieve through their offenselessness. In X 36.12, it is "well-being;" in I 24.15, it is "innocence." In fact, the two amount to the same, for to be innocent is to be secure from the evil that comes from offense, and thereby to ensure one's well-being. This idea is clearly stated in a verse similar to these two:

V 82.6 ánāgaso áditaye
 devāsya savitūḥ savé
 vísṣvā vāmāni dhīmahi

Without offense for the sake of innocence and under the compelling commandment of the god Savitar, we would receive all desirable things.

Here in line b, as in X 36.12c, the poet desires to be in obedience to the

commandment of Savitar. In the latter verse, such obedience would make him offenseless for the sake of his well-being. In V 82.6, the poet wishes to be offenseless so that he will be innocent. As the poet of V 82.6 makes clear, however, by gaining innocence, he expects to receive all the things that make for well-being.²¹

With these verses belongs also IV 3.8, which concludes a section of the hymn in which the poet asks Agni if he has done anything wrong (vs. 5) and what Agni will say about him to the other gods (vss. 5-8). Then the poet finally asks:

IV 3.8 kathā śárdhāya marútām rtāya
 kathā sūré bṛhaté prchyāmāṇaḥ
 prāti bravó 'ditaye turāya
 sādhā divó jātavedas cikitvān

When you are questioned, how will you reply to the host of Maruts for the truth [= for them to ascertain the truth], how to the lofty sun, and how to the mighty one for innocence [= in order for him to ascertain our innocence]? From heaven do you, who know how, bring success (to our worship), o Jātavedaḥ.

Geldner and Renou understand áditi here as the name of the goddess and turā as an adjective modifying another god who is not named. Thus Geldner (RVÜ I: 420) translates, "der Aditi, dem mächtigen (Himmel)" and Renou (EVP XIII: 6), "à Aditi, au fort (Indra)." That áditi is the name of the goddess here is possible, but not likely, because of the parallelisms of lines a and c. Just as turāya is parallel to śárdhāya as the person who is addressed, so áditaye is parallel to rtāya²² as the end or purpose of Agni's testimony. In the two lines the poet wants to learn what Agni will say in order that the gods will know the truth and thus will know that the

²¹So similarly, AV VII 34(35).1d ánāgasas te vayám áditaye syāma.

²²Rtā is neither an adjective (as Geldner understands it here) nor personified (Renou). In this passage, as elsewhere, it is an abstract principle.

poet has been innocent. The intention of line c is very similar to that of VII 62.2, for example, in which the poet asks the sun to testify to his guiltlessness: VII 62.2cd prá no mitráya varunāya vocó, 'nāgasō aryamné agnáye ca "You will proclaim us to be offenseless to Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, and Agni.

The parallelism of IV 3.8 and VII 62.2 also helps establish the identity of the god called turá in IV 3.8. In view of VII 62.2, this unnamed god ought to be one of the Ādityas, probably Varuṇa, for he would be the god most likely to be addressed in the question of determining the worshipper's innocence. VII 51.1, 60.8, and VIII 27.6, in which turá describes the Ādityas, support this conclusion.

Áditi is also better understood as meaning "innocence" in one other passage, in which the form áditeḥ appears:

IV 12.4cd kr̥dhī śv àsmāñ áditer ánāgān
vy énāṃsi śís Ratho víśvag agne

Make us those without offense because of the innocence (which you create for us). You will release guilt on every side, Agni.

Geldner (RVÜ I: 432) translates c, "so mach uns fein vor Aditi frei von Schuld" (so similarly Oldenberg 1897a: 354) without explaining how he justifies translating the ablative or genitive áditeḥ as "vor Aditi." Renou (EVP XIII: 102) does mention the "syntaxe irrationnelle" of the passage and suggests that áditeḥ may be an ellipsis for áditer upásthē or may be taken as an ablative "à partir d'Aditi." Neither of these two alternatives is particularly convincing, as Renou himself tacitly admits. Actually, the syntax is neither irrational nor inexplicable if áditi means "innocence." The form can then be explained as an ablative of cause. In this verse, the poet hopes that Agni will release him completely from the

blame or guilt which offense brings and restore him to the condition of innocence.

In addition to these attestations of áditi "innocence," there is another substantive adititvá which has much the same meaning. This word occurs once in VII 51.1:

VII 51.1cd anāgāstvé adititvé turāsa
imām yajñāṃ dadhatu śróṣamāṇāḥ

If they heed us, let the mighty (Ādityas) place this worship in offenselessness and blamelessness.

The hope expressed in these lines is, as Geldner notes, that the gods will cause the worship to achieve its envisioned end, which is to free the worshipper of the effects of some offense. This was a vital purpose of worship: I 104.6ab sá tvām na indra sūrye só apsv, ànāgāstvá á bhaja ... "Give us a share in the sun, Indra, and in the waters, (and) in offenselessness." In this verse, the poet sets forth the things necessary for life. He asks for a share in the sun, which here represents life itself as opposed to the darkness of death; in the waters; and in offenselessness, which keeps him in the favor of the gods and prevents their wrath.

To summarize: áditi means "the boundless" or "boundlessness." More specifically, it denotes freedom from the bonds of offense and guilt, and therefore can be translated "blamelessness" or "innocence." Though usually the name of a goddess, áditi also occurs in the RV in its appellative meaning. The interpretation of áditi is confirmed especially by those verses in which áditi occurs with ánāgaḥ "offenseless." The poets ask to be offenseless for the sake of maintaining their innocence and because of their innocence. They ask that their worship be secure in offenselessness (anāgāstvá) and blamelessness (adititvá).

The Goddess Aditi

If áditi means "blamelessness, innocence," then Aditi must be the goddess who brings and rewards innocence or the personification of innocence. Her role and functions, at least in the earlier parts of the RV, bear out this interpretation, for these derive easily and immediately from this conception of her character.

The verses in which Aditi is simply the deified principle of innocence illustrate how the goddess is defined by that principle. Consider, for example, VII 87.7:

VII 87.7bc vayám syāma várūṇe ánāgāḥ
 ánu vratāny áditer ṛdhántaḥ

We would be offenseless under Varuṇa, as we prosper according to the commandments of Aditi.

This verse closely resembles I 24.15 and V 82.6, discussed above. In both, the poet asks to be "offenseless for the sake of innocence" and obedient to the authority of the gods. In VII 87.7, the poet again seeks to be offenseless and obedient, but instead of describing innocence as that which he wants to achieve, he introduces Innocence herself, whose commandments define blamelessness. The intention of all three poets is the same, but the third gives greater vitality to his verse by his vision of innocence as a goddess.

Or again, the prayer in X 100 for "wholeness and innocence" finds an echo in V 69.3, in which the poet begs the goddess Innocence for wholeness:

V 69.3 prātár devīm áditim johavīmi
 madhyāṃdina úditā sūryasya
 rāyé mitrāvaruṇā sarvātāt-
 éle tokāya tánayāya sám yoh

Early in the morning and at the rising of the sun, I summon the goddess Aditi for wealth and wholeness, o Mitra and Varuṇa. I call for prosperity and life for my seed and lineage.

In IV 2.11, the poet asked Agni to affirm his innocence and therefore to give him wealth and a good lineage. Here, instead of saying that he should win wealth because of his innocence, the poet says that he would win it through the power of Innocence herself.

In other verses the personality of Aditi is further elaborated, but the notion of innocence remains decisive in the descriptions of her. Thus, we would say that a man's innocence wins the approval of the gods. The Vedic poet can express the same thought by saying that if the goddess of innocence favors a man, then the gods approve him:

VII 38.4 abhí yám devy áditir grṇāti
 savām devásya savitúr *juṣāṇāḥ²³
 abhí samrājo várūṇo grṇanty
 abhí mitráso aryamā sajoṣāḥ

Whom the goddess Aditi favors, who rejoices under the compelling commandment of Savitar, him the universal kings, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman and others in agreement (with them) do (also) favor.

Since Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman are singled out as the gods who bless the one favored by Aditi, obedience to the commandment of Savitar must imply the innocence represented by Aditi is blamelessness with regard to the principles which these three gods uphold.

²³ The text reads juṣāṇā. If this reading is accepted, the first two lines could be translated: "Whom the goddess of innocence favors as she rejoices under the compelling commandment of Savitar..." But it is not entirely clear to me what such a translation might mean. I expect the man himself to be under the commandment of Savitar. These two lines might have this meaning: to say that the goddess of innocence thrives under Savitar might be a way of saying that an innocent person thrives under him. I think, however, the better course is to emend juṣāṇā to juṣāṇāḥ. Line c would then be an instance of the Vedic construction in which a participle, inflected in the nominative, refers to a noun in the accusative, cf. Insler 1968a: 223 and 1968b: 15f. It was the peculiarity of this construction for later editors which led to the redactional change to juṣāṇā.

Again, if offenselessness makes a man innocent, so evil-doing causes him to lose his innocence. And just as the former idea can be expressed by saying that offenselessness wins the favor of the goddess of innocence, so also the poet can say that the evil-doer loses the favor of that goddess:

X 87.18bc ā vṛścyantām āditaye dūrēvāḥ
 pārainān devāḥ savitā dadātu

Let those of evil action alienate themselves from Aditi. Let the god Savitar deliver these (to their doom).

If āditi were translated here as "innocence," as it could be, the meaning would be the same. Note the presence of Savitar once again: he is the power which enforces the principle represented by Aditi.

As the goddess of innocence, Aditi is its measure and its judge:

X 12.8cd mitrō no ātrāditir ānāgān
 savitā devō varuṇāya vocat

Now Mitra, Aditi and the god Savitar will each declare us (to be) without offense to Varuṇa.

Varuṇa here is the sovereign to whom the other divinities testify. Mitra is summoned to witness to the poet's adherence to his agreements and Savitar to affirm his obedience to the compelling commandments of the gods. Aditi finds her place here because she will declare the poet to be innocent of offense.²⁴

Elsewhere Aditi is not summoned to witness to man's innocence, but rather--along with the Ādityas--to restore him to a state of innocence:

VII 93.7cd yāt sīm āgās cakṛmā tát sú mṛla
 tād aryamāditih śisrathantu

If we have committed any offense--have mercy on that! --let Aryaman, Aditi (and the others) release that (from us).

²⁴Cf. also IV 39.3.

Aditi is asked to release the poet from his offense because as the goddess of innocence, it is within her power to declare a man free from guilt. Being made guiltless once again, the poet no longer need fear that he might suffer the consequences of past offense.²⁵

In the same way, Aditi is asked to save her worshipper from the vengeance of the gods who punish offense. Thus,

VII 62.4 dyāvābhūmī adite trāsīthām no²⁶
 yé vām jajñūḥ sujānimāna ṛṣve
 mā héle bhūma varuṇasya vāyór
 mā mitrásya...

O lofty Heaven and Earth, rescue us (and you too) Aditi (and those) of noble birth who have given birth to you [i.e. to Heaven and Earth]. May we not be in the anger of noble Varuṇa nor in that of Mitra.

Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 90) and Hillebrandt (1876: 46f.) interpreted adite as an epithet of Heaven and Earth.²⁷ There is some justification

for doing so on the basis of X 63.3, but as Oldenberg (Noten II: 49) pointed out, there is no necessity. In the first two lines the poet simply invokes Heaven and Earth, the gods who created heaven and earth, and Aditi. Aditi is singled out because she can free the poet from the wrath of Varuṇa and Mitra. Why? Because she can create innocence, which removes the offense, against which the anger of these two gods is directed.²⁸

²⁵Cf. VI 50.1 and VIII 67.10 in which Aditi is begged for mercy. In II 27.14 this mercy is asked specifically for a man who has committed an offense.

²⁶Line a = IV 55.1b.

²⁷Hillebrandt analyzes adite as f. du. < *aditā, a stem which is rightly rejected by Oldenberg and Bergaigne.

²⁸Cf. also VII 88.7, in which the poet by winning help from Aditi hopes to win release from the fetter of Varuṇa.

One of the gifts particularly associated with Aditi is the gift of light, which is the symbol of life.²⁹ The goddess of innocence brings light because it is the blameless man who lives, for he is under the protection of the gods:

VII 82.10abc asmé índro várūṇo mitró aryamā
dyumnām yachantu máhi śárma sapráthah
avadhram jyótir áditer rtāvṛdhah

Let Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman, who increase through the truth, offer to us heavenly life, great and far-reaching protection, and the indestructible light of Aditi [or: "of innocence"].

Likewise, the "gift of Aditi" in I 185.3 is also, as Geldner (RVÜ I: 265) notes, the light of life:

I 185.3ab anehó dātrām áditer anarvām
huvé svārvad avadhām námasvat

I summon the sunlike and indestructible gift of Aditi, which is secure and without hostility and which is deserving of homage.

Through Aditi, the man under her protection is rescued from anything which might diminish or threaten his life:

X 36.3abc vísvasmān no áditiḥ pātv āmhaso
mātā mitrásyā várūṇasyā revātaḥ
svārvaj jyótir avrkām naśīmahi

Let Aditi, the mother of Mitra and Varuṇa the wealthy, protect us from distress. (Thereby) we would attain the sunlike light which is free of danger.

The poet calls her the mother of Mitra and Varuṇa not only to define her character and the principles for which she stands but also to establish her power to protect, for these sons of hers are the mighty sovereigns over human affairs. Cf. VIII 67.11ab pārṣi..., úgraputre jighāmsataḥ

²⁹ Cf. II 27.14cd urv āsyām ābhayaṁ jyótir índra, mā no dīrghā abhī naśan támisrāḥ "I would attain the broad light which is free of fear, Indra. May the long darkness (of death) not attain us."

"Take (us), (Aditi), whose sons are mighty, past those trying to kill (us)."³⁰

Similar too are the many passages in which Aditi is asked to offer shelter (śárman) to her worshippers. Sometimes she alone is summoned as in VI 75.12d = vs. 17d = VIII 47.9b áditiḥ śárma yachatu "Let Aditi offer (us) shelter" and IV 25.5ab ná tám jinanti bahávo ná dabhṛá, urv āsmā áditiḥ śárma yamsat "Him neither many nor a few violate. To him Aditi will offer broad shelter."³¹ At other times, she is invoked along with the Ādityas: I 107.2d = IV 54.6d ādityáir no áditiḥ śárma yamsat "Aditi, together with the Ādityas, will offer us shelter."³²

Another poet expresses the hope that Aditi and the Ādityas together will offer him safety in a verse which has occasioned difficulty for translators:

VII 52.1ab ādityāso áditayaḥ syāma
pūr devatrā vasavo martyatrā

Because áditayaḥ is plural, some scholars have taken it as an adjective modifying the subject of the sentence. That is to say, they render line a either as "we would be áditi (like) the Ādityas"--so Geldner (RVÜ II: 228) and Renou (EVP V: 105); or, with a textual change of ādityāsaḥ to ádityāsaḥ, as "O Ādityas, we would be áditi"--so Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 161; 1884: 41) and Güntert (1923: 148).³³ Colinet (1893: 83), who tried to show that Aditi is never anything but a proper noun in the RV, translates

³⁰ For other passages in which Aditi is called upon to "protect" (pā) or save her worshippers, cf. I 106.7; IV 55.1; VII 40.4, 62.4; VIII 18.6, 67.14, 18.

³¹ Cf. X 63.10b = AV VII 6.2d = 6.3 (7.1)b; AV VII 6.4 (7.2).

³² Cf. VII 60.8 and X 66.3b.

³³ Oldenberg (Noten II: 41) considered either possible.

"(Pareils à des) Ādityas, (à des) Aditi, puissions-nous être (comme) un lieu fortifié... " The plural āditayah, according to him, was motivated by the poet's comparison of the goddess Aditi to the plural subject "we." The lack of parallels to the construction which Colinet proposes makes this solution unconvincing, but I agree that āditi is the name of the goddess and not an adjective.

First of all, I believe the emendation to ādityāsaḥ is necessary. As Oldenberg (Noten II: 41) pointed out, the vocative in line b speaks for the change in accent, as does the beginning of VII 51, the hymn preceding this one, in which the Ādityas are addressed and asked to bring adititvā. The shift from the vocative to the nominative could have been motivated by VII 51.2a ādityāso āditir mādayantām. But in VII 52.1, āditayah is not nominative, as Bergaigne and Güntert understood it, but vocative. It reflects an old Indo-Iranian diction in which, when a single individual and a group are invoked together, they may both be inflected in the plural. This is the type mazdāscā ahurāṇhō found in Y 30.9 mazdāscā ahurāṇhō ā. mōyastrā (read ā mōi (a)stā)³⁴ baranā asācā "Wise One and you other lords, be present to me with support and with truth," cf. Y 31.4. Thus the translation of VII 52.1ab is simply, "O Aditi and you Ādityas, we would be a fortification among gods and men, o Vasus." The poet asks that he may become unassailable, protected from any kind of attack, whether by men or by the gods.

This same theme occurs in another verse, which has also been misunderstood. This verse is VIII 18.4:

VIII 18.4 devēbhir devy adité
 'riṣṭabharman ā gahi

³⁴According to Insler 1975: 34, 173.

smāt sūribhiḥ purupriye suśārmabhiḥ

Goddess Aditi, you whose support is unable to be harmed, come hither with the gods (to us), along with those patrons who offer good protection, o you who are dear to many.

The compound āriṣṭabharman is unclear. Geldner (RVÜ II: 317) translates "deren Bürde unversehrt ist" and comments that it probably refers to her pregnancy. Renou's translation (EVP V: 105) is similar, but he understands the word to mean "qui portez sans dommage" (EVP VII: 92). The best clue to the poet's intentions is line c, in which he asks Aditi and the Ādityas for patrons "who offer good protection." He addresses these gods because he knows them as gods who will protect. Elsewhere, this protection of the Ādityas makes one "unable to be injured" (āriṣṭa), as in II 27.16d āriṣṭā urāv ā śārman syāma "We would be unable to be injured under your broad protection, (Ādityas)" and VIII 27.4cd āriṣṭebhiḥ pāyubhiḥ ..., yāntā no 'vṛkām chardīḥ "With protections unable to be injured, offer us shelter which knows no danger." The bhārman of Aditi, which is also āriṣṭa, therefore, is parallel to śārman and pāyú. It is the "support" which Aditi gives her worshippers in order to sustain them against any eventuality. There is little or no connection with pregnancy or motherhood.³⁵

Finally, a third difficult verse probably also belongs with these.

This is I 153.3:

I 153.3 pīpāya dhenúr āditir ṛtāya
 jānāya mitrāvaruṇā havirdé

³⁵This understanding of bhārman is also supported by the only other occurrence of the word in X 88.1cd tāsya bhārmaṇe bhūvanāya devā, dhārmaṇe kām svadhāyā paprathanta "Through the power peculiar to him [= Agni], the gods became far-reaching in order to support the world and to sustain it." The sense of "support" for bhārman is confirmed by the parallelism between it and dhārman.

hinóti yád vām vidáthe saparyán

sá rātāhavyo mānuṣo ná hótā

A (veritable) cow, Aditi has grown for the sake of truth, for the man who gives the oblation, when he, serving in the ceremony and giving his oblation like the hotar among men [i.e. Agni], urges you two on, o Mitra and Varuṇa.

The man who tries to please and to prosper the gods of alliance and commandment is prospered through the goddess of innocence. The dative rtāya here means for the sake of rewarding the obedience of men in carrying out the ceremony properly.³⁶ The only unusual feature in this verse is that Aditi

is called a cow, although this is really not so mysterious. Aditi is portrayed as a generous source of wealth for the pious man, and the cow is the proverbial source of wealth in Vedic India; therefore, Aditi is a cow. Compare IV 23.10, in which Heaven and Earth are called cows because they bring nourishment: IV 23.10cd rtāya prthivī bahulé gabhīré, rtāya dhenū paramé duhāte "The two worlds are wide, extensive, and deep. For the sake of the truth do these two foremost cows give milk." Like Aditi in I 153.3, here Heaven and Earth become the sources of riches for those who adhere to the truth.

The power of innocence to protect those who are guiltless is reflected not only in the shelter which the goddess gives but also in the qualities with which she is described. Just as the god of love, for example, is fickle because people in love are fickle, so also the goddess of innocence has the qualities which the guiltless man possesses. For example, she herself is at least once called "without offense:"

VIII 101.15 mātā rudrānām duhitā vásūnām
svāsādityānām amṛtasya nābhiḥ

³⁶ Cf. the use of rtā as a final dative alongside the dative of indirect object in IV 3.8.

prā nú vocam cikitūṣe jánāya

mā gām ānāgām áditiṃ vadhiṣṭa

The mother of the Rudras, daughter of the Vasus, sister of the Ādityas, origin of immortality--this I shall now proclaim to the people who understand. Slay not (that) cow, the offenseless Aditi.

Here a cow is the embodiment of the goddess of innocence because she is harmless and beneficent. What creature, therefore, more deserves to be declared inviolable?³⁷ But the emphasis on the offenselessness and inviolability of the cow is fully understandable when we see that the cow is a symbol. The identity of the cow is stated in the next verse:

VIII 101.16 vacovídām vācam udīráyantīm
vísāvābhir dhībhir upatíṣṭhamānām
devīm devébhyaḥ páry eyúṣīm gām
ā māvrkta mártyo dabhrácatāḥ

To me who finds the (proper) word, who arouses speech, who stands ready with all insights, a goddess who has come from the gods, a cow, has the mortal of mean intelligence turned.

The cow is the poetic gift or inspiration which allows men to sing songs pleasing to the gods. In vs. 15 it is called "offenseless" and the goddess of innocence because it is without defect and creates a thing pleasing to the gods. It is called the "mother of the Rudras" etc. possibly because the gods need the praises of men for their own support, just as men need the gods in order to win sustenance for themselves.

Of the adjectives which describe Aditi, the most frequent is anarvān "without hostility." Compare II 40.6c ávatu devy áditir anarvā "Let the goddess Aditi, who is without hostility, help us" and in VII 40.4c suhávā devy áditir anarvā "Goddess Aditi of easy summons, who is without hostility..." In addition, there are two problematic lines in which we

³⁷ Cf. Geldner (RVÜ II: 432) and Schlerath (1960c: 311f.).

expect anarván to modify áditī, but in which the morphology appears to exclude its doing so. These lines are V 51.11b svastī devy áditir anarvāṇaḥ and X 92.14c gnābhīr víśvābhīr áditim anarvāṇam. These two passages cannot be separated from one another nor from VII 40.4c and II 40.6c. The problem is that anarvāṇaḥ and anarvāṇam appear to be masculine nom. sgl. or pl. and acc. sgl. respectively, even though áditī is specifically called a goddess in V 51.11b, as well as in II 40.6c and VII 40.4c.

To bring X 92.14c into line with II 40.6c and VII 40.4c poses little difficulty. Nom. sgl. f. anarvā in II 40.6c and VII 40.4c, as well as the nom. sgl. m. anarvā are from anarván, not a stem anarvā as Grassmann (1872: sp. 52) believed. Compare yōṣā from yōṣan and kanyā from kanyān.³⁸ These feminine n-stems were *e-grade originally. Thus to yōṣan there is a nom. pl. yōṣanaḥ (8x), which allows us to posit an acc. sgl. *yōṣanam. This form is the basis for attested yōṣanām, in which the vowel was lengthened to mark it as a feminine and from which, in turn, a paradigm was formed on a stem yōṣanā. Likewise, 1x in the RV, there is an acc. sgl. kanyānām, which was built from an original *kanyānam or *kanyānam. Therefore, from anarván we expect an acc. sgl. f. anarvāṇam alongside the nom. sgl. f. anarvā, like yōṣā: *yōṣanam and kanyā: *kanyānam. And this is the form of X 92.14.

Since there existed an acc. áditim anarvāṇam, the poet in V 51.11b formed the nom. áditir anarvāṇaḥ on the model of the thematic adjectives and nouns, in which an acc. in -am has a nom. in -aḥ. This process has an exact parallel. In RV X 125.2b, the phrase pūṣānam bhāgam, "Pūṣan and Bhaga" occurs, with the proper acc. sgl. to the stem pūṣān. But this acc.

³⁸Altind. Gr. III §56 ad., pp. 112f.

formed the basis for a new nom. pūṣāno bhāgaḥ, which appears in X 93.4d.³⁹

Thus, V 51.11b svastī devy áditir anarvāṇaḥ translates without difficulty as "(Let) the goddess Aditi who is without hostility (measure out) well-being (for us)," and similarly, X 92.14c gnābhīr víśvābhīr áditim anarvāṇam "(We praise) Aditi, who is without hostility, together with the wives (of the gods)." In the latter verse, line d aktór yúvānam nṛmānā ádhā pátim is to be taken separately: "... (and) the youthful lord of the night and the one whose mind is on man."⁴⁰

It is striking that this adjective anarván never describes any of the Ādityas either singly or as a group. The only time it occurs in connection with them is when the "paths of the Ādityas" are called anarván in VIII 18.2. The explanation lies in the comments I made at the outset. This adjective describes Aditi because anarván is the quality that humans who are innocent possess. Thus in I 94.2 the man who fulfills his responsibility to the gods through Agni is called anarván: I 94.2ab yásmāi tvám āyājase sá sādhaty, anarvā kṣeti dádhate suvīryam "For whom you [= Agni] worship, he succeeds. Without hostility, he dwells in peace. He assumes for himself good manly power." Even more telling is I 136.5ab yó mitrāya varuṇāyāvidhāj jāno, *narvāṇam tám pári pāto āmhasaḥ "Which man has honored Mitra and Varuṇa, this one, who is without hostility, the two protect from distress." Mitra and Varuṇa watch over proper conduct of men and if a man proves to act properly, the two gods protect him. They themselves

³⁹The only other occurrence of anarvāṇaḥ is also better interpreted as nom. sgl. f.: VIII 31.12 arámatir anarvāṇo, víśvo devásya manasā, ádityānām anehá ít "(Let) Piety, which is without hostility, each one with the mind of a god, (and) the faultless (protection) of the Ādityas (come)."

⁴⁰The words aktóḥ... pátim, as Geldner (RVÜ III: 293) and Renou (EVP V: 61f.) have noted, refer to Agni. So also does nṛmānāḥ, cf. X 45.1, 3. Therefore, ádha must function in place of a relative pronoun.

are not called anarván because they can be hostile. They do become angry and they have the right to punish. The innocence which Aditi represents, however, is the state of offenselessness, not its avenger. Therefore, she, like the innocent man, is truly "without hostility."

A third adjective which describes Aditi for similar reasons is urú "wide," or in this context, "free." Men call on the gods to let the innocent one go free (I 152.6; IV 2.11), and the goddess of innocence herself frees men (VIII 25.10, 47.9). Because guiltlessness wins freedom, Aditi, Innocence herself, is free: V 46.6d uruvyācā áditiḥ śrotu me hávam "Let Aditi, whose range is free, hear my summons" and VIII 67.12 anehó na uruvraje, úrūci... krdhí... "Create that which is faultless for us, o free one, who proceeds freely" (cf. also AV VII 6.2).

To recapitulate: Aditi is the goddess of innocence or the very personification of innocence. This view of her fundamental character stems from the interpretation of áditi as "innocence, blamelessness" and is supported by descriptions of her in the RV. In a number of verses, she is hardly more than the deified personification of innocence. In others, she assumes somewhat more personality, but the functions she carries out clearly relate to her central character as the goddess of innocence. Thus, for example, the offenseless man wins the favor of the goddess, but the guilty one alienates himself from her. She testifies to the offenselessness of the innocent and can restore the offender who appeals to her to a state of innocence. She prospers and protects the innocent and makes him live. Even the qualities of the innocent are reflected in the descriptions of her. She is "offenseless," "without hostility," and "free."

In many respects, these functions and role are similar to those played by Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. Striking, however, is that except in

comparatively rare instances, like I 136.3a, where she is called dhāra-yātkṣitiḥ "who establishes the people" and VI 51.3, where, together with Mitra and Varuṇa, she is one of the mahá rtáśya gopāh "guardians of great truth," she is not described by the authority concepts which are characteristic of the Ādityas. The explanation for this difference lies in the different things symbolized by the Ādityas and Aditi. Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are the divine guardians of society, and, especially in the case of Varuṇa, the counterparts of the king himself. Aditi represents obedience to the principles they represent. She herself is not a ruler over men.

Excursus I: Agni and Aditi

Although innocence is usually personified as a goddess, it can, like Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, assume visible form in Agni, the fire of the sacrifice. As in the case of Agni as mitrá, Agni is called áditi because of his role in the sacrificial alliance between gods and men. The kindled fire is the symbol of innocence, for it represents a man's intention to fulfill his religious responsibility to the gods or to expiate any offense against them, and it anticipates the freedom from guilt which he wins thereby. Thus, the fire is the concrete manifestation of offenselessness and the instrument through which it is attained. This is expressly stated in I 94.15:

I 94.15

yāsmāi tvām sudravīṇo dādāśo

'nāgāstváṁ adite sarvātātā

yām bhadreṇa śávasā codáyāsi

prajāvatā rādhasā té syāma

We would be those to whom you will do honor by granting offenselessness along with completeness, o bringer of good substance and Innocence (itself), and (we would be those) whom you will encourage through your auspicious might with care, which brings progeny.

Agni is here called "Innocence" because he brings "offenselessness." How he does so is not described in this verse, but this hymn is principally a summons for Agni to perform his function as intermediary with the gods.

Cf. especially vs. 2a yásmāi tvám āyājase sá sādhati "For whom you perform the worship, that one wins success." Or again, in vs. 6, Agni is addressed as the adhvaryu, the hotar, the prāsāstar, and the potar, for: I 94.6c viśvā vidvāñ ārtvijyā dhīra puṣyasi "Understanding all things, wise one, you bring the priestly offices to fruition." Vs. 15, therefore, may mean that Agni is Innocence because he performs the priestly functions for men. He helps them fulfill their duty to the gods and thereby makes them offenseless.

This same theme appears elsewhere in passages in which the horse who bears the oblation to the gods--again probably Agni himself--is called "Innocence." Cf. I 162.22:

I 162.22 sugavyam no vājī svāsvyam puṁsāh
putrāñ utā viśvāpūṣam rayīm
anāgāstvam no āditiḥ kṛnotu
kṣatrām no āsvo vanatām haviṣmān

Let the booty-winning (horse make) for us good (herds) of cows and horses, together with men, sons and wealth which is completely prospering. Let Innocence create for us offenselessness. Let the horse, carrying the oblation, win rule for us.

Here "offenselessness" is one of the basic and desirable things of life, like children, wealth, rule etc. It is won for man in the same way as these others: through the performance of the ritual.

Similar also is IV 39.3:

IV 39.3 yó āśvasya dadhikrāvno ākārīt
sāmiddhe agnā uśaso vyūṣtau
anāgasam tam āditiḥ kṛnotu
sá mitréṇa vāruṇenā sajóṣāḥ

Who has sung the praise of the horse Dadhikrāvan at the kindling of the fire and the dawning of the dawn, him let Innocence make offenseless, the one who is of like temperament with Mitra and Varuṇa.

When the man sings the praises of the oblation-bearing horse at the institution of his worship, that horse, as the personification of his innocence, is expected to win him the prize of offenselessness. Note that the m. pronoun sá in line d excludes any possibility of taking āditi as the goddess Aditi.

In slightly different terms, this theme also finds expression in another passage:

X 64.13cd nābhā yātra prathamam samnāsāmahe
tātra jāmitvam āditir dadhātu nah

At the navel, where we first were to come to agreement, there let Innocence (again) establish our kinship (with the gods).

The "navel" is the worship: I 164.35b ayam yajñó bhūvanasya nābhiḥ "The navel of creation is this worship." It is through the worship that men and gods first carried out their fundamental exchange of support. This poet seeks to renew the compact between men and the gods in his current worship. Therefore he expresses the hope that Agni, as Aditi, will help bring the worship to fulfillment and, by doing so, that he will bring this man and the gods into harmony with one another and into mutual support. That is to say, as the representation of the innocence of the worshippers, Agni ensures that the gods will not be offended and alienated from the worshipper.

As Innocence, Agni not only brings "offenselessness" or harmony with the gods, but he also brings the concrete rewards which the innocent man has deserved. Thus, for example, in X 11.2, Agni presents the wishes of men to the gods so that they can fulfill their part of the sacrificial compact:

X 11.2cd iṣṭāsya mādhye áditir ní dhātu no
 bhrātā no jyesthāḥ prathamó ví vocati

Let Innocence establish us in the midst of that desired. Our elder brother (Agni) will, as the foremost (speaker), explain (these desires).

Earlier we noted that the goddess of innocence brings the rewards which men deserve. Here the fire of the worship, as the manifest symbol of the worshipper's innocence, is expected to bring them.

In another verse, VIII 19.14, Agni will travel forth to the gods for him who tends properly and ensure that worshipper's prosperity:

VIII 19.14 samīdhā yó nísitī dāśad áditim
 dhāmabhir asya mártyaḥ
 vísvét sá dhībhīḥ subhāgo jánāñ áti
 dyumnáir udná iva tārīṣat

Which mortal will serve Innocence with kindling and with preparation in accordance with his [= Agni's] principles, he, having a good fate, will surpass all (things), in accordance with his hopes [literally "thoughts"], and (beyond all other) peoples through his splendour as if across (the water).⁴¹

The statement that the man serves innocence can be taken on two levels. On the one hand, in carrying out the worship, the worshipper serves the principles of innocence, for he strives to be offenseless. But since his efforts to adhere to these principles are concretely manifested in his service to the fire, the fire itself is called "Innocence."

⁴¹Lines cd, cf. Oldenberg *Noten* II: 91f.

In another verse, however, the Innocence represented in the fire of the worship is simultaneously symbolized as the goddess of innocence.⁴²

II 1.11 tvám agne áditir deva dāśúṣe
 tvám hotrā bhāratī vardhase girā
 tvám ílā śatāhimāsi dākṣase
 tvám vṛtrahā vasupate sárasvatī

You, god Agni, are Aditi for him who serves you. As Hotrā Bhāratī, you increase through the hymn. As Idā, who lives a hundred winters, you (increase) to acquire skill. You, lord of goods, as the overcomer of obstacles are Sarasvatī.

Here Agni is successively identified with goddesses who represent parts of the worship: Hotrā Bhāratī, "the oblation of the Bhāratas," Idā, "refreshment," and Sarasvatī, who here probably represents the waters of ritual purification. So also Aditi must be an aspect of the worship. As Hotrā is the oblation offered by men, Idā the refreshment brought by men, Sarasvatī the waters employed by men, so Aditi is the innocence of men. She is the innocence manifested through their willingness to fulfill their compact with the gods. All these goddesses are identified with Agni because he is the principal intermediary and priest of the worship.

Similarly straightforward is the reference to Agni as aditi in VII 9.3:

VII 9.3ab āmūrah kavír áditir vivásvān
 susāmsān mītró átithīḥ śívó naḥ

(He is) for us the wise sage, Innocence, Vivasvat, the good ally who sits together (with us), and the kindly guest.

These lines rehearse Agni's many roles, but they all have one common element: Agni is the intermediary with the gods for men. He is called a "sage," that is, a priest, because he offers up the worship to the gods, as in I 13.2bc yajñām devēṣu naḥ kave, adyā kṛṇuhi vītāye "Today set our worship among the

⁴²Contrast IV 39.3, above, where áditī cannot be simultaneously the goddess and the fire.

gods, o sage, in order for them to enjoy it." He is Vivasvat, who is well-known as the first sacrificer,⁴³ for Agni was the fire of the worship which Vivasvat was the first to kindle. Compare V 11.3b mandráh kavír úd atistho vivásvatah "As the eloquent sage of Vivasvat you arose." He is further called an "ally" and a "guest" because he is the representative of the gods among men. So also, he is called Innocence because he brings the gods into harmony and kinship with men. He prevents the alienation of the gods from men.⁴⁴

Other passages are less clear than these, but they are at least compatible with this interpretation. First is V 31.5:

V 31.5ab vṛṣṇe yát te vṛṣaṇo arkám árcān
índra grāvāṇo áditiḥ sajośāh

When the bulls will sing their song to you the bull, o Indra, (together with) the pressing stones, and áditi (will be) in agreement...

The problem is why áditi appears here at all. Hillebrandt (1876: 45) thought áditi is the goddess Aditi portrayed as the cow whose milk is mixed with soma. Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 95) compared the passage to VIII 101.15 where Aditi is the hymn which goes to the gods. Geldner (RVÜ II: 29) pointed to soma's preparation "in the lap of Aditi," and Oldenberg (Noten I: 327) suggested that Aditi is a personification of a sacrificial utensil. I think here, as elsewhere, áditi is Agni. For the association of the fire and the pressing stones, cf. III 30.2cd sthirāya vṛṣṇe sávanā kṛtémā, yuktā grāvāṇaḥ samidhāné agnáu "These pressings have been readied for the strong bull. The pressing stones are employed, now that the fire is kindled." Possibly the simultaneous kindling of the fire and the pounding of the pressing stones

⁴³cf. Oldenberg 1917: 281f.

⁴⁴Similar also is IV 1.20.

constitutes the "agreement" of the two with the singing of the priests.

Even more difficult is V 59.8:

V 59.8 mímātu dyáur áditir vītáye naḥ
sám dānucitrā uśāso yatantām
ácucyavur divyám kósam etá
ṛṣe rudrasya marúto grṇānāḥ

Interpreters have either taken áditiḥ with dyáuh⁴⁵ or as a name for the earth, complementing dyáuh.⁴⁶ Syntactically, the second alternative is preferable, for it is difficult to construe vītáye meaningfully with mímātu. Thus the whole verse, except for the end of line a, means "Let heaven bellow... Let the dawns, giving signs of gifts (of rain), arrange themselves. These Maruts, (sons) of Rudra, o ṛṣi, have plied the heavenly bucket as they are being praised in song." The whole hymn is a summons to the Maruts for rain, and this verse describes the coming of that rain: the heavens thunder, the dawns are misty, and the Maruts (= the winds) pour out the rain. In this context, since men are about to be pleased by the rains, naḥ must be the dative subject of the infinitive vītáye, cf. IX 105.3b ayám sárdhāya vītáye [sutáh] "This (soma) is pressed for the host (of Maruts) to enjoy it."⁴⁷ If vītáye naḥ means "for us to enjoy (it)," the "it" can only be the rains.

Now the problem is to determine what verb should be supplied. In parallel constructions, several possibilities occur. For example, there is úpa, á yā (or gam) "drive hither" fairly frequently with vītáye, as in VI 16.10ab ágna á yāhi vītáye grṇānó havyádātaye "Agni, since you are being praised in song, drive hither to enjoy (the oblation), to receive

⁴⁵For example, Bergaigne 1878-83 III: 90 and Hillebrandt 1876: 15.

⁴⁶Geldner (RVÜ II: 67) and Renou (EVP X: 93).

⁴⁷So also IX 104.3

the oblations."⁴⁸ To translate, "(Let) áditi (come hither) for us to enjoy (the rains)," however, is unlikely since áditi should bring the rains. But there is another construction with vítáye: namely, vítáye is often used with á vah "convey hither," with Agni as subject and the gods as object, as in VI 16.44 áchā no yāhy á vaha, abhí práyāmsi vítáye, á devān sómapīṭaye "Drive hither to us, (Agni). Convey hither the gods to the refreshments in order for them to enjoy them, hither the gods in order for them to drink the soma."⁴⁹ If "the rains" are the object of vítáye, this construction yields excellent sense: "(Let) áditi (convey hither the rains) for us to enjoy (them)." It would also suggest the identity of áditi as Agni, for Agni bears the rain from the gods in heaven in return for the worship of men, according to X 12.3cd vísve devā ánu tát te yájur gur, duhé yád éñī divyām ghṛtām vāh "All the gods have complied with this prayer of yours, (Agni), when the mottled (cow) milks forth the heavenly ghee and water." But can "the rains" substitute for "the gods," who are the usual objects of á vah? They must, because the context leaves us little choice, although the poet is, I believe, deliberately ambiguous. He means to suggest that Agni should convey both the gods to the worship and the rains, which are man's reward for the worship. Indeed, were it not for the context in which the half-line appears, I would have translated, "(Let) the innocent one (convey hither the gods) to enjoy our (oblations)."

Finally, there is a very obscure passage, which I only tentatively place with the preceding:

⁴⁸Cf. also I 135.1, 3, 142.13; V 51.5; VII 68.2; VIII 20.10, 16, 93.22 and similarly I 74.4; VII 57.2; VIII 101.10.

⁴⁹Cf. I 74.6; V 62.2; VII 16.4; VIII 60.4, and similarly, II 2.6.

V 44.11abc

śyená āsām áditiḥ kakṣyò mádo

viśvāvārasya yajatásya māvínah

sām anyām-anyam arthayanty étave

The falcon [= the foremost] of these (hymns), Innocence, and the exhilarating drink stemming from the woods, which belongs to (Indra), who grants all boons, who is worshipful, and who is tricky--they [= the priests] make (these) ready, one after the other, (in order for Indra) to come.

This translation requires comment. The interpretation of the "falcon of these (hymns)" as meaning "the foremost" or "the best" of hymns is based on the Vedic poets' admiration for the śyená "falcon." The swiftness of the gods is compared to that of the falcon (I 118.11), and he manifests his own glory (sváyaśah, X 77.5). He is particularly valued because he can be trained: he is called arthín "accomplishing his tasks" (X 127.5) and kṛtvān "effective" (X 144.3). These are the same attributes that the priests hope their hymn will have. Of all hymns they wish that theirs will fly fastest to the gods and be most successful in accomplishing its aim. Note also that this phrase śyená āsām echoes āsām... agrimā "foremost of these (hymns)" in vs. 9. Their common reference to the hymn, their close proximity, and their similarity justify interpreting the one phrase by the other.

The second difficulty involves the words kakṣyò mádaḥ. Geldner (RVÜ II: 49) understood kakṣyà as "Leibgurt" and Renou (EVP V: 26) similarly interpreted it as "un courroie." But both of the resulting translations, "der Rauschtrank... füllt den Leibgurt" and "la boisson-enivrante... est (comme) un courroie (à faucon)," are questionable. More likely, kakṣyà is an adjective from kákṣa "woods." Since the soma comes from the wild forests of the mountains, it is "stemming from the woods."⁵⁰

⁵⁰Cf. X 34.1 in which Soma is called maujavatá "stemming from Mt. Mūjavat."

Third, there is no reason to understand viśvāvāra, yajatá and māyín as proper names, as Geldner does. It is especially Indra to whom the soma belongs, and these three words are epithets of that god. Elsewhere he is called viśvāvāra "who grants all boons" (I 30.10; VIII 46.9); yajatá "worshipful" (II 14.10, 16.4, 21.1); and māyín "tricky" (VIII 76.1). Compare also I 80.7, II 17.5, IV 30.12, 21 and VI 22.6, all of which speak of acts done by Indra through his māyā.

But even if this is the proper translation of these three lines, the precise interpretation of áditi remains uncertain. It could refer to the goddess Aditi, but I think that the context suggests a different interpretation. Since in line a áditi parallels the hymn and the soma, and since line c apparently refers to the preparation of the things mentioned in line a, áditi should describe an element of the worship ceremony. The fire of the worship is the most conspicuous element of the worship left unnamed; so the best alternative is to understand áditi as the "innocence" of the worshippers symbolized by that fire.⁵¹

To summarize: Agni is called áditi "Innocence" because the innocence of men is symbolized in the fire of the worship. The kindling of the fire reflects the willingness of men to worship gods, and thus the fire becomes the symbol of their efforts not to offend or disobey the gods. This idea is most clearly expressed in I 94.15, 162.22 and IV 39.3, in which Agni, the áditi, is said to win "offenselessness" for men. Elsewhere Agni as Innocence brings harmony with the gods and thereby rewards to the worshipper. He is truly Innocence, that is, he really succeeds in winning offenselessness

⁵¹ Agni is not the only god to be called áditi. In VIII 48.2, Soma is áditi: 2ab antás ca prāgā áditir bhavāsi, avayātā háraso dáivyasya "When you have entered within, you will become Innocence, the redresser of divine wrath." Soma is Innocence because he pleases the gods and propitiates their anger.

for men, because he serves as the faithful priest and intermediary between men and gods through whom the sacrificial compact is fulfilled.

Aditi as Mother

If there is an abstract substantive áditi "innocence" and if Aditi is the goddess of innocence, then it is easy to see why Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman might be called "sons of áditi" and "Ādityas." These three gods are the guardians who watch over human behavior and secure the social order. As such, they are the protectors of the principles which define the nature of innocence. Just as Agni is called sūnúḥ sáhasaḥ "son of strength" because he manifests strength, so also the Ādityas are "sons of áditi" because they manifest the principles of innocence. But, as I noted in the introduction to this chapter, the expressions "son of áditi" and "Āditya" could also be understood as meaning that these gods are, quite literally, the offspring of Aditi. This idea of Aditi as a mother did arise, in fact, and "motherhood" eventually became an essential aspect of Aditi's character. She became not just a metaphorical but a real mother and a mother not just of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, but of many other gods as well. Traces of this development occur within the RV, for the theme of the motherhood of Aditi is treated in a very different way in the early RV than it is in the later parts of the text.

In the oldest stratum of the RV (according to Arnold's Vedic Metre), the motherhood of Aditi is mentioned in a very restricted and characteristic manner. First, she is only the mother of the Ādityas, and second, her motherhood serves to stress other, more central functions. Thus in VIII 67.11ab párṣi..., úgraputre jighāmsataḥ "Take (us), Aditi, whose sons

are mighty, past those trying to kill (us)," she is said to have powerful sons in order to emphasize the power of innocence to protect. See also II 27.7, where the power of Aditi is stressed by calling her "she whose sons are kings" (rājaputrā).⁵²

Among the other early references to Aditi's motherhood is VI 67.4:

VI 67.4 ásvā ná yā vājínā pūtābandhū
 rtā yād gārbham áditir bhāradhyai
 prā yā máhi mahāntā jāyamānā
 ghorā mártiyāya ripāve ní dīdhaḥ

Since Aditi (sought) to bear her offspring according to the truth,⁵³ she established for the cheating mortal these two violent ones, like horses which are champion thoroughbreds, these two great ones, who excelled greatly at birth.

These two are Mitra and Varuṇa. Aditi has brought them forth as her defenders to establish the true and correct way. The emphasis is not on her motherhood or fertility *per se*. Rather, the poet wanted to stress that Mitra and Varuṇa stand for truth and innocence, and therefore he describes them as born from the goddess of innocence in accordance with the truth.

So also is VIII 25.3:

VIII 25.3 tā mātā viśvāvedasā
 -suryāya prāmahasā
 mahī jajānāditir rtāvarī

Their mother, the great and truthful Aditi, gave birth to these two, who possess all things and who are of great might, for lordship.

⁵²Cf. III 4.11.

⁵³rtā is instr. sgl. of rtā. Other possibilities: loc. sgl. of rtū, Lanman 1880: 411, followed by Geldner RVÜ II: 108; rtā in the sense of rtāvarī "Rta incarné(e)," f. by attraction, Renou EVP VII: 52; nom. sgl. f. as adj. modifying Aditi, Oldenberg *Noten* I: 412.

Again the stress is on the intimate association of Mitra and Varuṇa with truth and innocence. So dedicated are they to upholding the principles of truth and innocence that they must be the sons of the "truthful goddess of innocence" herself.

Less emphatic is X 132.6a yuvór hí mātāditir vicetasā "For Aditi is the mother of you two, o attentive ones." This line must be taken separately from X 132.6bcd dyaur ná bhūmih páyasā pupūtāni, áva priyā didiṣ-ṭana, sūro ninikta raśmibhiḥ "Like heaven (sends down the rain) and the earth (is thus) to become purified⁵⁴ with the water, (in that way) you send down things dear to us and wash us with the rays of the sun." The intention of this verse is that, since the goddess of innocence is the mother of Mitra and Varuṇa, they will recognize the innocence of the poet and will bestow gifts upon him like heaven bestows rain on the earth. There is no reason to identify Aditi as the earth in line b as Geldner (RVÜ III: 365) implies.

The "middle" strata of the RV--Arnold's "Normal" and "Cretic" periods --show both continuities and departures in the representation of Aditi's motherhood. There are still passages which describe Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman as "sons of áditī" in the meaning "sons of innocence" (II 28.3; IV 42.4; VII 41.2), and Aditi is still called the mother of Mitra and Varuṇa (VIII 47.9; X 36.3), but a new element is introduced. The motherhood of Aditi itself becomes an important theme. Now whenever the poet needs a prototype of a mother, he might mention Aditi.⁵⁵

Some passages are transitional, in that Aditi still appears in her

⁵⁴pupūtāni, cf. Renou EVP VII: 64.

⁵⁵For upāsthe áditeḥ etc., a phrase which generally belongs to this period, see excursus.

traditional role, but her motherhood is portrayed in more graphic terms.

Examples are V 42.2 and VII 18.8:

V 42.2ab prāti me stóman áditir jagṛbhyāt
 sūnūm na mātā hṛdyam suśévam

Aditi should embrace my hymn of praise with kindness, like a mother her beloved son.

VII 18.8ab durādhyò áditim sreváyanto
 'cetáso ví jagṛbhre páruṣṇīm

They of evil intent, causing Aditi to miscarry, lacking understanding, have diverted the Paruṣṇī.

In these two verses, Aditi's character as goddess of innocence is still uppermost. She accepts the properly composed hymn, but she is offended by evil-doing. Nevertheless, the mode of expression in each draws strongly on themes of motherhood and thus intensifies the image of the goddess as mother.

In this period there are also references to gods other than Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman as offspring of Aditi: a fact which again points to a generalization of Aditi's motherhood. Consider, for example, IX 69.3b śrathnīté naptīr áditer ṛtām yaté "The daughter of Aditi loosens (her dress) for him who follows the truth."⁵⁶ The daughter of Aditi is the soma plant.⁵⁷ Importantly, the reference to Aditi here is motivated by more than Aditi's motherhood: Aditi herself is truthful (VI 67.4), a guardian of the truth (VI 51.3), and she responds to the truth (I 153.3). Here the daughter of Aditi, conforming to the nature of her mother, serves him who "follows the truth," that is, who acts according to the truth of

⁵⁶For ṛtām i, cf. Lüders 1951-59 II: 484.

⁵⁷Geldner RVÜ III: 60 and Renou EVP IX: 18. Cf. also X 11.1, assigned by Arnold to the "Popular" RV.

the sacrificial compact. So also compare IX 74.3, in which Soma is called urvī gávyūtir áditer ṛtām yaté "...broad pasturage of Aditi for him who follows the truth."⁵⁸

In X 63, Aditi even is the mother of all the gods, and her most salient characteristic is that she gives nurture:

X 63.2 vīśvā hí vo namasyāni vándyā
 nāmāni devā utá yajñíyāni vah
 yé sthā jātā áditer adbhyás pári
 yé pṛthivyās té ma ihá śrutā hávam

For all your names, o gods, are worthy of homage, praise and worship. Do you who are born from Aditi (or) from the waters (or) from the earth harken now to my summons.

X 63.3 yébhyo mātā mādhumat pínvate páyah
 pīyūṣam dyáur áditir ádribarhāh
 ...
 tāñ ādityāñ ánu madā...

Applaud the Ādityas, for whom their mother Aditi, the heaven of rocklike firmness, swells the honey-sweet milk and beestings.

The Ādityas are in this verse all the gods.⁵⁹ Their mother Aditi is identified with the heaven in vs. 3 because both produce liquid nourishment. Aditi gives milk; heaven sends down the rain. There is no need to

⁵⁸In I 113.19a, Dawn is addressed as the "mother of the gods and the face of Aditi" (mātā devānām áditer ánīkam). But Aditi is introduced not because she is the mother of the gods, to whom Dawn is simply compared. The reason that Aditi is mentioned is suggested in the stanza preceding this one, I 113.18ab yā gómatīr uśasaḥ sárvavīrā, vyuchānti dāsúṣe mártvyāya "The dawns which bring cattle and many men shine for the mortal who serves (the gods)." The dawns appear beneficently to the pious man, the man who worships the gods. She is called the "face of Aditi" in vs. 19 for this very reason. Her appearance is a token of the rewards which the worshipper's innocence will bring him.

⁵⁹On the gods as Ādityas, see below, pp. 293ff.

translate āditi here as "sans bornes" (Bergaigne 1878-83 III: 90), "unbegrenzt" or "unvergänglich, ewig" (Hillebrandt 1876: 15) or the like. At the same time, there is no indication in this verse that Aditi represents "innocence" either. This poet sees in Aditi the archetype of motherhood; none of her other characteristics are emphasized. This, then, is the first passage studied in which motherhood, and not innocence, defines the basic character of Aditi.

Another passage from this same period probably also portrays Aditi as the divine, nurturing mother. Unfortunately, its translation is problematic. This verse is I 72.9:

I 72.9 ā yé víśvā svapatyāni tasthūh
 kṛṇvānāso amṛtatvāya gātum
 mahnā mahādbhiḥ pṛthivī ví tasthe
 mātā putráir āditir dhāyase véh

Translations and interpretations of this verse have differed widely. Thus, Oldenberg (1897a: 83): "The Earth has spread herself far and wide with them who are great in their greatness, the mother Aditi, for the refreshment of the bird,⁶⁰ with her sons who have assumed all powers of their own dominion, preparing (for themselves) the way to immortality." Geldner (RVÜ I: 96): "Während sie [Die Aṅgiras '?] lauter gute Nachkommenschaft erlangten und sich zur Unsterblichkeit den Weg bereiten, hat sich die Erde von den an Macht Grossen [Den Ādityas?] getrennt, die Mutter von ihren Söhnen, die Aditi um den Vogel [Das Feuer?] zu nahren." Renou (EVP XII: 19): "(Les Āditya) qui ont gravi toutes maîtrises autonomes, se créant une voie-d'accès vers l'immortalité, / --grâce à (ces dieux) grands en grandeur la Terre s'est étendue, (la Terre) mère grâce à (ses) fils (les Āditya), Aditi (elle-même),

⁶⁰The bird is Agni, according to Oldenberg.

pour la satisfaction-rituelle de l'Oiseau (solaire)."

All these translations are embarrassed by line d. What is the "bird" and what does it mean to say that the earth spread itself--or separates itself according to Geldner--"to nourish" it? Already this difficulty was recognized by Pischel (VSt. I: 217), who rightly compared this line to I 141.6d where it is said of Agni that véti dhāyase, "he turns his attention for the care (of men and gods)." By simply striking the accent on véh, veḥ can be a 3 sgl. aor. to vī. Pischel then translates "...mit grossen Söhnen breitete sich mächtig aus die Erde, die Mutter Aditi; möge sie herbeikommen, (uns) Gedeihen zu verschaffen." But lines cd could be taken separately from lines ab. Then this translation follows: "(Those) who have assumed all their own dominions through creating the way to immortality, by (the) great ones the earth in its greatness⁶¹ has been extended. Through (these) her) sons,⁶² the mother Aditi has turned her attention for the care (of men)." The phrase amṛtatvāya gātum is probably the worship itself, as in III 31.9ab nī gavyatā mānasā sedur arkāih, kṛṇvānāso amṛtatvāya gātum "(The Aṅgiras) with their minds full of a desire for cattle, installed (the fire) with hymns, creating the way to immortality." The sons of Aditi here could be any divine group: the Ādityas, the Aṅgiras, or even all the gods. Aditi is apparently introduced because she is a mother, who would be expected to concern herself with providing care. Or she may well be the mother Earth. In that case, the verse praises the gods who have

⁶¹ mahnā "in the (earth's) greatness," cf. X 70.5cd, uśatīr dvāro mahinā mahādbhir, devām rātham rathayūr dhārayadhvam "Willing (this), o doors, together with the great ones in accordance with (your) greatness, sustain the divine chariot, since you care for the chariot."

⁶² mahādbhiḥ... putráih. These probably refer to the same gods, but who they are is uncertain.

made the earth ample enough for human life and thus able to nourish, as a mother, those who live upon her.

Excursus II: upásthē áditeh

Six times in the RV there occurs the expression "in the lap of Aditi" (upásthē áditeh, IX 26.1, 71.5, 74.5; X 5.7, 70.7) or "from the lap of Aditi" (áditer upásthāt, VII 88.7). The interpretation of this phrase is very difficult, and I can offer no more than a tentative suggestion. These passages fall into two groups. The one instance of áditer upásthāt is the only reference to the "lap of Aditi" in which the phrase is not in the locative, does not appear in maṇḍalas IX and X, and does not occur in a ritual context. This indicates that its interpretation may be very different from that of other passages in which the expression occurs. The second group consists of the references to the "lap of Aditi" in maṇḍalas IX and X, which all have a similar context.

The single ablative construction is actually the easiest to interpret. It appears in VII 88.7:

VII 88.7abc dhruvāsu tvāsú kṣitíṣu kṣiyānto
 vy āsmāt páśam várūṇo mumocat
 ávo vanvānā áditer upásthāt

Dwelling among the enduring dwellings, (we worship) you, (thinking), "Varuṇa will release the fetter from us, who desire help from the lap of Aditi."

Elsewhere, as in II 40.6, the poet calls for help from Aditi herself.

Thus the expression "from the lap of Aditi" probably means simply "from Aditi herself." The image of the lap emphasizes that this gift really is from the goddess. Compare VI 62.6 tá bhujoyúm... adbhyāṇ, samudrāt...

ūhathuḥ... árṇaso nír upásthāt "The two (Áśvins) dragged Bhuju out from the waters, from the ocean, from the lap of the flood," in which "from the lap of the flood" is the equivalent of "from the waters." Likewise, upásthāt is a poetic paraphrase in III 33.1 prá párvatānām usatī upásthāt... vípāt chutudrī páyasā javete "Forth from the lap of the mountains race the two eager ones, the (rivers) Vipās and Śutudrī" and X 18.10d eṣā tvā pātu nírṣter upásthāt "Let (the earth) protect thee from the lap of destruction." In these passages, the lap of the mountains is the mountains themselves and the lap of destruction, destruction itself.

In four out of the five occurrences of upásthē áditeh, something is said to exist "in the lap of Aditi" during the sacrifice. In three instances, IX 26.1, 71.5 and 74.5, the object is the soma and Geldner (RVÜ III: 26) suggested that the "lap of Aditi" describes the hide, the barhis, or possibly the soma-vat. He may well be right, but it might also simply refer to the place of the worship rather than a specific object, or perhaps even to the properly performed ritual itself. In any case, the lap here suggests security and protection, cf. ŚB I 1.2.23 upásthā ivainad abhārṣur íti vā āhur yāt sūguptam gopāyānti "When people guard anything very carefully, they say that 'they carried it in their lap, so to speak.'"

If the "lap" is a secure place and áditi has its appellative sense, then the proper worship could be viewed as the "lap of áditi" in the sense of the "place of security which comes from the worshippers' innocence." Because it thus provides security, such a worship becomes an appropriate place in which to bring the soma or any of the ritual objects, which must be kept safe.

In the light of these observations, I interpret X 70.7:

X 70.7

urdhvó grāvā brhád agnīḥ sámiddhaḥ
priyā dhāmāny áditer upásthe
puróhitāv ṛtvijā yajñé asmín
viduṣṭarā dráviṇam á yajethām

The pressing stone (is) erect. The fire is kindled on high. The proper elements are in the lap of Aditi. In this worship, do you two, priest and ceremoniant, you, whose knowledge is superior, win (for us) wealth by your worship.

The significance of áditer upásthe would be more apparent if dhāmāni were clear. Renou (EVP XIV: 47) translates priyā dhāmāni as "les institutions aimées," and he is probably correct in explaining them as "signes tangibles de l'institution (sacrificielle)."⁶³ If dhāmāni refers to the appurtenances of the worship, to say that they are "in the lap of Aditi" might mean that they are secure in their proper ritual places. This worship is explicitly referred to in line c, and note that yajñé asmín is parallel to áditer upásthe. In lines ab the poet says that the objects of the ritual are established in the worship and in lines cd that the priest and ceremoniant are ready to perform it.

Elsewhere it is specifically Soma who is placed "in the lap of Aditi:"

IX 71.5ab sám ī ráthaṃ ná bhuríjor aheṣata
dása svásāro áditer upástha á⁶⁴

The ten sisters [= the fingers] of the hands have assembled him [Soma] like a chariot in the lap of Aditi.

The idea is that the hands of the priests have prepared the soma properly within the correctly performed ceremony.⁶⁵

⁶³Renou EVP XIV: 118

⁶⁴According to Arnold (1905), this is a hymn belonging to the early period, but I doubt that this verse can really be separated from these other passages, which belong to the middle periods of the RV.

⁶⁵Similar is also IX 74.5cd dádhāti gárbham áditer upástha á, yéna tokám ca tánayaṃ ca dhāmahe "He places in the lap of Aditi the embryo [Soma] through which we shall receive seed and lineage."

A case for the identification of the "lap of Aditi" with a specific ritual object, however, could be made for IX 26.1:

IX 26.1 tám amṛkṣanta vājínam
upásthe áditer ádhi
víprāso áṇvyā dhiyā

The inspired ones have cleaned it [the soma], which wins booty, in the lap of Aditi, through the woolen (sieve) and their insight.

In this passage, the "lap of Aditi" could be the soma-vat,⁶⁶ but since neither this nor any other particular object can be consistently identified with the lap of Aditi, the expression is probably better taken as referring to the worship as a whole.⁶⁷

Aditi as Mother in the later Veda

The late RV,⁶⁸ as well as the AV, shows further development of the pattern which appeared in the middle period of the RV. There are still references to Aditi as the mother of the Ādityas (cf. AV III 8.2; V 1.9) and sometimes her motherhood is subsidiary to the image of her as the goddess of innocence (cf. AV VII 6.2, 6.3 (7.1)). But elsewhere the motherhood of Aditi continues to be generalized.

⁶⁶Cf. especially IX 6.5 yám átyam iva vājínam, mrjánti yóṣaṇo dása, vāne krīlantam átyavim, and also IX 15.7, 85.7, 109.12.

⁶⁷In the one reference to the "lap of Aditi" in the late RV, X 5.7, the expression emphasizes the motherhood of Aditi. This is also true of two of the three occurrences of the phrase in the AV, AV VII 6.4 (7.2) and XIII 1.38. By the time these verses were written, Aditi was above all the divine mother, so it is not surprising that the "lap of Aditi" should have this connotation.

⁶⁸The Rgvedic verses discussed in this section come from what Arnold called the "Popular RV," which is, by and large, younger than the other parts of the text.

The image of Aditi as mother emerges most clearly in AV XI 1, a hymn for offspring. In vss. 1 and 11, the woman who wishes to give birth is called Aditi (cf. Bloomfield 1897: 613). Thus, vs. 1ab ...áditir nāthi-téyām, brahmaudanām pacati putrákāmā "This Aditi here, who is in distress, having a desire for sons, cooks the rice-dish for the brahmins." These lines probably allude to the legend told in the YV that Aditi cooked a rice-dish in order to bring forth sons.⁶⁹ In this legend and its ritual application, Aditi is the prototype of a mother and the representation of all human mothers. No other characteristic of Aditi occurs at all.

The image of Aditi as mother also dominates the speculations of RV X 72. The poet first announces the purpose of his hymn, which is to describe the births of the gods (jānā devānām). Brahmanaspati, he says, created these births like a smith; and that which exists was born from that which was not (vs. 2). Then, after further developments:

X 72.4 bhūr jajña uttānāpado
bhuvā áśā ajāyanta
á diter dá kṣo ajāyata
dákṣād v áditiḥ pári

Earth was born from the one whose feet were outstretched. The regions were born from the earth. Dakṣa was born from Aditi and Aditi from Dakṣa.

X 72.5abc áditir hy ájaniṣṭa
dákṣa yá duhitā táva
tām devā ánv ajāyanta

So then Aditi was born, o Dakṣa, she who is your daughter, (and) after her the gods were born.

⁶⁹Cf. TS IV 5.6; KS VII 15 (78: 15ff.); MS I 6.12 (104: 10ff.); TB I 1.9.1. A reference to the legend also occurs in AV VI 81.3 yām parihastām ábibhar, áditiḥ putrakāmyā, tvastā tām asyā ábadhnād, yāthā putrām jānād iti "What bracelet Aditi wore when she had a desire for sons, that Tvaṣṭar has bound on this woman, (saying), 'so that she will bear a son.'"

The interpretation of these verses is only possible by comparing them to other passages that mention Aditi and Dakṣa. Unfortunately, the only one that is at all transparent is X 64.5:

X 64.5ab dákṣasya vādite jānmani vraté
rājānā mitrávaruṇā vivāsasi

Or (perhaps) at the birth of the skillful one in the (fulfillment) of your commandment, o Aditi, you are about to win the two kings, Mitra and Varuṇa, for us.

Geldner (RVÜ III: 236) tentatively and Schmidt (1958: 75) more positively identify dákṣa here as Agni. This interpretation is supported by III 14.7, in which Agni is directly called dákṣa.⁷⁰ Geldner takes dákṣasya with vraté as well as jānmani, but since elsewhere there are references to the commandment of Aditi (cf. I 166.12 and VII 87.7), the vratá here is probably her commandment. The poet is saying, therefore, that since the fire of the worship has been kindled properly, Aditi, as the goddess who judges what is proper and improper, will recommend the worshipper to Mitra and Varuṇa.

I interpret X 5.7 along the same lines:

X 5.7abc ásac ca sác ca paramé vyòman
dákṣasya jānmann áditer upásthe
agnír ha naḥ prathamajā rtásya

There is both that which exists and that which does not exist in the highest heaven at the (time of) the birth of the skillful one in the lap of Aditi. (But) Agni is the first born of truth for us.

If again dákṣa is Agni,⁷¹ the idea is that Agni both remains in the highest heaven, and yet does not remain there, because he has descended to earth.

⁷⁰Otherwise, Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 92 n.2), who takes dákṣa as an epithet to Aryaman, mentioned in line c.

⁷¹So also Bergaigne 1878-83 III: 93 and Schmidt 1958: 75.

Since the phrase "lap of Aditi" probably refers to the well-performed ritual, line b likely describes the birth or kindling of the fire in the worship.

However, these findings can not apply directly to X 72.4, for in that verse dákṣa is not the skillful Agni, but simply the god Skill. Nevertheless, if this verse, like X 64.5 and X 5.7, should be viewed in the context of the ritual, then the co-generation of dákṣa and áditi has a specific sense. The priests' "skill," their capacity to bring the sacrifice to success, is born from their "innocence" in not violating any of the rules which govern the ritual. But the accuracy of their ritual performance, in turn, is dependent upon, is "born from," their skill in carrying out the ceremony. Here this basic ritual truth has cosmogonic significance. The interdependency of skill and innocence reflects that of the god Skill and the goddess Innocence, who in turn symbolize the unknown male and female principles through whose interaction living beings are generated.⁷² This idea that the creation of the world and its creatures is duplicated in the ritual is fundamental to later ritual speculation and in the RV, appears especially in hymn X 90, the puruṣa-sūkta.

Hymn X 72 then concludes with the actual birth of gods and men:

X 72.8 aṣṭáu putráso áditer
 yé jātás tanvās pári
 devān úpa práit saptábhiḥ
 pārā mārtaṇḍám āsyat

Eight were the sons of Aditi who were born from her body. With seven, she went forth to the gods, but Mārtaṇḍa she cast away.

⁷²The best known reference to this mystery of the generation of the world from male and female powers is found in X 129.5, tiraścīno vītato raśmīr eṣām, adhāḥ svid āsīd upāri svid āsīt, retodhā āsan mahimāna āsan, svadhā avastāt prāyatīḥ parastāt.

X 72.9

saptábhiḥ putráir áditir
úpa práit pūrvyām yugām
prajāyai mṛtyáve tvat
púnar mārtaṇḍám ābharat

With her seven sons, Aditi went forth unto the first generation. Here, she bore Mārtaṇḍa for progeny (on the one hand) and for death on the other, again (and again).

In these verses, the image of Aditi as mother, already implied in vss. 4 and 5, becomes dominant. Her story, which is briefly told in these two verses, is elaborated in the later Veda.⁷³ According to MS I 6.12 (104:10ff.), KS XI 6 (151:5ff.), TS VI 5.6, and ŚB III 1.3.3, 4, Aditi bore seven sons (TS, four), but an eighth son (TS, fifth) was a miscarriage, born from an undeveloped foetus (aṇḍa). This son, therefore, is called Mārtaṇḍa, "stemming from a dead foetus" (MS, ŚB). He is then formed into Vivasvat, who is the father of Manu and Yama and therefore the forerunner of the whole human race. The story of the formation of Mārtaṇḍa into Vivasvat is an addition by these writers to make their story consistent with the myths of Manu and Yama. In the RV, Mārtaṇḍa is not the ancestor or forerunner of men, but is the prototype of humanity. It is humanity itself which "stems from a dead foetus" and which is therefore mortal. The gods, on the other hand--for the seven sons of Aditi here represent the gods--ascend with Aditi to immortality. Man has immortality only through a line of progeny.⁷⁴

The emergence of Aditi as the great mother of the gods and the source of life continued in other parts of the later Veda. According to ŚB VI 5.2.21,

⁷³Cf. Hoffmann 1957: 85ff., from which much of the following paragraph is summarized.

⁷⁴This interpretation of Mārtaṇḍa as the symbol of humanity also accords well with a verse in which the word mārtaṇḍa simply means, I believe, "human:" II 38.8cd vísvo mārtaṇḍo vrajām ā paśúr gāt, sthāsó jánmāni savitā vy ākah "Every human has gone (to his home), (every) animal to its pen. Savitar has divided the races (of creatures) according to their proper place."

all the gods are the sons of Aditi (cf. RV X 63), though in ŚB I 3.1.4, she is also the wife of the gods. In AB V 27, she is symbolized in the Agnihotra-cow, which must be a mother cow. In an expiatory prayer addressed to that cow, she is called "goddess Aditi," who "has bestowed a (complete) lifetime on the lord of sacrifice" (AB V 27.4 āyur yajñapatāv adhāt, cf. ŚB XII 4.1.9), for the cow, like Aditi, is the source of life and nurture.

So also in AV XII 1.61, Aditi is called kāmadúgdha, "who milks out wishes," that is, "who yields wishes as her milk." This adjective usually occurs in a context in which the poet asks that a certain ritual object be made a "cow" (dhenú), who grants wishes. Thus, for example, this name is used of the rice dish in AV IV 34.8, of the grain in AV XVIII 4.33, and of the calf of Virāj in AV XIII 9.2. In calling Aditi kāmadúgdha, therefore, she is compared to a nurturing mother cow (cf. also AV XVIII 4.30). Note that these references to Aditi as a cow contrast to that in RV VIII 101.15. There it is the offenselessness of the cow that allows her to become a symbol of Aditi. Here it is her motherhood and the nurture she provides. This change illustrates the development of Aditi to the very image of motherhood.

The most frequent identification of Aditi in the later Veda, however, is with the earth. Time and again, after quoting a verse or a prayer to Aditi, a Brāhmaṇa will explain that "Aditi is the earth."⁷⁵ No doubt there were several factors which led to this identification. Clearly, the general tendency of the later Veda to assign divinities a particular place in the natural order provided impetus toward some identification of this type.

⁷⁵ Cf. ŚB I 1.4.5, 3.3.4; III 2.3.6, 3.1.4, 3.4.1; IV 1.2.6, 5.2.4; V 3.5.37; VI 5.4.2, 7.3.8; VII 4.2.7; VIII 2.1.10, 4.2.9; XI 1.3.3; XII 4.1.9; XIII 1.8.4; KB VII 6; AB I 8.16; TB I 1.6.5, 2.3.4, 2.5.2, etc.

But the most important was that Earth, like Aditi, is the all-mother.

Consider one of the earlier references to Earth as Aditi, AV VI 120.2:

AV VI 120.2 bhūmir mātāditir no janītram
 bhrātāntārikṣam abhīśastyā naḥ
 dyaūr naḥ pitā pītryāc chām bhavāti

Let Earth, our mother Aditi, our birthplace--, let our brother the Mid-space (protect) us from the spell. Heaven, our father, shall create well-being for us in place of ancestral (guilt).

Because the Earth is our mother, she is called Aditi, for in this poet's mind, divine motherhood is expressed by Aditi.

The themes of the Earth as Aditi, of Earth as Mother, of Aditi as Mother intertwine in the Brāhmaṇas as well. ŚB V 5.2.8, for instance, calls for the sacrifice of a pregnant cow for Aditi. The text then explains that "Aditi, in truth, is this earth." By offering the cow, the priest "thereby makes him (the sacrificer) her child (iyām vā āditir asyā evainam etād gārbhaṃ karoti). Here motherhood, which dominates the ritual act described in this section, conjoins Aditi, Earth, and the mother cow. Similarly, ŚB V 3.1.4 prescribes that the king go to the dwelling place of his wife and there prepare a caru for Aditi, for "Aditi is this Earth, and she is the wife of the gods" (iyām vāi prthivy āditiḥ sēyām devānām pātnī). The sacrificial fee is a cow, for "this earth is, as it were, a cow: she yields all wishes to men as her milk; and the cow is a mother, and this earth is, as it were, a mother; she bears men" (dhenúr iva vā iyām manuṣyēbhyaḥ sārvaṇ kāmān duhe mātā dhenúr mātēva vā iyām manuṣyān bibharti). Again, the theme of motherhood dominates the chain of associations. Since an offering must be made in the dwelling of the queen, the goddess Aditi is its natural recipient, for she is the divine mother and hence the counterpart of the queen. Once Aditi is mentioned, the usual comment that Aditi is

the Earth follows, and then the common nature of Aditi as Earth and the dakṣiṇā-cow appears in the description of them as mothers, who bear and nurture the human race.⁷⁶

There is a final Rgvedic verse, which I find very difficult to interpret either in light of the other references to Aditi in the RV or the later Vedic characterization of the goddess. This verse is I 89.10:

I 89.10 áditir dyáur áditir antárikṣam
 áditir mātá sá pitá sá putráḥ
 vísve devā áditiḥ páñca jánā
 áditir jātám áditir jánitvam

Heaven is Aditi. The mid-space is Aditi. Mother, father, and son is Aditi. Aditi is all the gods and the five peoples. What is born is Aditi and what is yet to be born.

Although this verse also occurs as AV VII 6.1, in neither the RV nor the AV is the context of any use. It is certainly an addition to RV I 89, and AV VII 6(6, 7) is a miscellaneous collection of verses about Aditi. According to AB III 31.9ff., Aditi is here Earth. If this interpretation is correct, Aditi is identified with the natural and familial orders and all divine and human beings because the earth is the foundation and mother of all things (cf. ŚB VII 4.2.7). This interpretation is supported by the structure of the verse itself. In line a, the omission of the earth, when both space between heaven and earth and the sky are mentioned, is remarkable. If Aditi is the earth, however, then the triad mother-father-son in line b duplicates the natural triad earth-air-sky of line a. The earth therefore plays a double role as the beginning of the natural series and the ultimate foundation of everything. Adopting this interpretation assumes, however,

⁷⁶The identification of Aditi as the Earth became so stereotyped that Earth might be called Aditi, whichever of its qualities was being stressed. Thus, AB I 8.12, 14 says that Aditi is "for support" (pratiṣṭhityai) because Aditi is the Earth (AB I 8.16, cf. TB I 1.6.5, 2.5.2, etc.).

that the verse is quite late, for it would be the only reference to Aditi as Earth in the RV.

Another possibility is that this verse echoes other speculative hymns which suggest that the world emerges from a feminine creative principle. Intimations of this idea occur in X 72.4, in which the creation of the earth and the natural world originates in "one whose feet are outstretched" (uttānāpad), a term which surely refers to parturition. Likewise, in AV VIII 10.1, the feminine Virāj--with whom Aditi is identified in ŚB VII 5.2.19--is said to have been "this universe in the beginning" (virāḍ vā idám āgra āsīt). Unfortunately, as is the case with many of the speculative hymns, there are too many possibilities and too few probabilities.

Summary

In the earlier parts of the RV, áditī is both a substantive, meaning "innocence," and the name of a goddess. The "innocence" to which áditī refers is offenselessness, especially with regard to the principles represented by the three Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. This interpretation of áditī is supported by the role which Aditi, the goddess of innocence or Innocence itself, plays in the RV. She prospers the man who adheres to the canons of proper behavior, while she disapproves of the man who offends. She can, however, redeem the guilty man and restore him to the condition of innocence, so that he need not suffer the consequences of his guilt. Aditi even receives the same epithets with which the offenseless man is described: she herself is "offenseless," "without hostility," and "free."

In the course of her development, however, Aditi assumed more and more the role of a mother. The origins of this evolution probably lie in

a poetic reevaluation of the meanings of Āditya and "son of āditi." Originally these were descriptions of the characters of certain gods, especially Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, but they could also be understood as statements of their genealogy. In the first stage of the development of this theme, Aditi is the mother strictly of the Ādityas and the emphasis is still on the ethical significance of this fact. That Aditi is the mother of the Ādityas means for the poets that Mitra and Varuṇa are born from Innocence and that therefore they stand in the closest possible relationship to Innocence. This use clearly reflects the idea that the Ādityas maintain the principles which determine guilt and innocence.

But during the time of the composition of the RV, this situation gradually changed. In the middle and late periods of the text, the motherhood of Aditi was represented not only as it was earlier, but also more graphically, as if it were an integral part of her character to be a mother. Gods other than the Ādityas are even portrayed as her offspring. And Aditi eventually became not so much the personification of innocence as the very representation of motherhood. The image of Aditi as mother dominates not only the late RV and the AV, but continues in the YV and other texts of the later Veda. In the Brāhmaṇas, she is identified more specifically with the mother Earth, who supports and nourishes all beings. Perhaps the motherhood of Aditi was even responsible for her development into an object of speculation in RV I 89.10.

ĀDITYA

In the preceding chapter, I argued that āditi means "innocence" and that ādityā and son of āditi might, therefore, describe Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman and relate them to the notion of innocence. The only way to confirm this possibility is to study ādityā and son of āditi as epithets of the three gods.¹ Two results could emerge from such a study. First, it would show whether the two expressions appear in a definable context. Second, since ādityā and son of āditi both unite Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman and distinguish them from the other gods, these expressions should reflect the common character of all three and the fundamental nature of each.

In general, the results of this study corroborate this interpretation of ādityā and son of āditi. They are somewhat ambiguous, however, because many passages in which these expressions occur either provide little or no contextual information or simply use them to refer to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. In short, while the poets understood ādityā and son of āditi as descriptive terms, they also employed them as names with no discernible attention to their meaning.² But when contextual information is available, a consistent image of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as ādityā-s emerges. They are ādityā-s when they are lords, who defend the principles which define human relations and those who adhere to these principles. Their functions as ādityā-s fall into three categories: they are (1) guardians of the

¹Passages in which ādityā refers to gods other than Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

²Cf. VII 44.1 dadhikrām vah prathamām aśvīnośāsam, agnīm sāmiddham bhāgam ūtāye huve, indram viṣṇum pūṣaṇam brāhmaṇas pātim, ādityān dyāvāprthivī apāh svāh, in which ādityā is a name, and just a name, of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. So also III 54.20, IV 34.8, V 51.12, VII 51.3, VIII 9.12, 27.6, 35.13ff., IX 61.7, X 36.1, 63.3, etc.

principles of right behavior; (2) protectors of the righteous; and (3) rulers, who carry out their judgements.

Guardians of Right Behavior

The term āditṛā often occurs when Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman punish any infringement of the order they govern. Their rule is characterized, first, by opposition to offense and guilt, second, by opposition to deception, and third, by opposition to untruth and support for the truth.

Opposition to Offense (āgaḥ) and Guilt (ēnaḥ)

Foremost among the faults which the Ādityas punish are those described as āgaḥ or ēnaḥ. The term āgaḥ means an offending act, which is personally committed, and ēnaḥ, a condition created through an offending act.³ The passages in which both āgaḥ and ēnaḥ occur illustrate this distinction, for according to their regular diction, a person commits āgaḥ and so bears ēnaḥ. A good example is IV 12.4:

IV 12.4 yác cid dhí te puruṣatrā yaviṣṭhā
 -cittibhiś cakṛmā kác cid āgaḥ
 kṛdhí śv āsmāñ āditer ānāgān
 vy ēnāṃsi śísṛatho víṣvag agne

³These two terms have often been considered as synonyms of one another (e.g. Hopkins 1924: 31 n., 18 n.; Rodhe 1946: 139). The work of Manessy (1961: 90ff.) and Gajendragadkar (1967: 36ff.) has established, however, that the two words appear in different contexts, and that they must be distinguished. But, in my view, neither scholar has successfully described the distinction between them. According to Manessy, āgaḥ is not a committed offense, but "la faute virtuelle, une source de fautes, un principe de mal," and ēnaḥ, "la faute commise ou susceptible de l'être, l'acte mauvais." For Gajendragadkar, āgaḥ "approaches more the conceptual range of sin in that it refers to an unethical act;" ēnaḥ, on the other hand, "is of the nature of calamity, a physical act, a crime" (p. 48).

If, youngest one, we have committed any offense (āgaḥ) against you through (the weakness of) our human nature or lack of understanding, make us those without offense because of the innocence (which you create for us). You will release guilt (ēnāṃsi) on every side, Agni.

The poet acknowledges that he may have committed an offense, but he asks Agni to remove the guilt resulting from offense. The conception of ēnaḥ as bondage, which is implicit in this verse, is explicit in VI 74.3 sómārudrā yuvám etāny asmé, víśvā tanūṣu bheṣajāni dhattam, áva syatam muñcātam yān no ásti, tanūṣu baddhām kṛtām éno asmát "O Soma and Rudra, place all these medicines in us, in our bodies. Untie! Free from us the guilt created (by us), which exists for us, bound onto our bodies." Significantly, it is ēnaḥ which is represented as bondage or as disease (lines ab), for both images suggest an enduring state and not a particular act.⁴

Similar is VII 88.6:

VII 88.6 yá āpír nityo varuṇa priyāḥ sán
 tvām āgāṃsi kṛṇávat sákhā te
 mā ta énasvanto yakṣin bhujema
 yandhí śmā vípra stuvaté várūtham

If your comrade, be he a companion, relative, or friend (of ours), shall commit (any) offenses (āgāṃsi) against you, o Varuṇa, may we not suffer from you by bearing the guilt (for it) (ēnasvat), o mysterious one. O inspired one, offer protection to him who praises (you).

Here the poet fears that if those close to him offend, some of the guilt will be placed on him. The offensive act which is committed by one person is opposed to the guilt for that act which might be shared by another.

⁴Note that ánāga (ánāgaḥ) functions as the opposite of ēnaḥ, for it is the condition of freedom from the consequences of offense. That is why the poet, even if he has committed an offense, can ask to be ánāgaḥ. The compound really means that one has no offenses held to account, not that one has never transgressed. This fact also accounts for the relative rarity of anenāḥ, which is attested only three times in the RV.

This conception of énaḥ as a condition which can be transferred from one person to another also occurs in VI 51.7a mā va éno anyákr̥tam bhujema

"We would not suffer from you the guilt created by another" and in VII 52.2c, which is almost identical.⁵ There are no instances, however, of an inherited or transferred ágah. The reason for this is clear: it is impossible to transfer an offending act from one person to another, but the condition of guilt, like a disease, can be passed on.^{6,7}

If Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are gods of social principles, then the offenses they punish should be primarily violations of social relations. While the acts which constitute ágah and create énaḥ are not well defined in the RV, they demonstrably include such violations. In this regard, I 185.8 is particularly informative not only because it describes social offenses (ágah), but also because it divides social relations into three categories, which correspond to the domains of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

I 185.8abc devān vā yác cakṛmā kác cid ágaḥ
 sákhāyaṃ vā sádāṃ íj jáspatiṃ vā
 iyám dhír bhūyā avayānam eṣām

⁵Cf. also X 63.8.

⁶Both ágah and énaḥ are used with the root kr̥ "make, do." For ágah kr̥ see I 179.5, 185.8; II 27.14; IV 12.4; V 85.7; VII 57.4, 87.7, 93.7; X 15.6. For énaḥ kr̥, I 24.14; II 28.7; VI 51.7, 74.3; VII 18.18. Clearly, ágah kr̥ means "commit an offense," as in I 179.5c yát sīm ágaś cakṛmā tát sú mṛlatu "If we have committed an offense, then let him have mercy (on us)." However, énaḥ kr̥ means "create guilt" either for oneself or for another.

⁷If such a distinction between ágah and énaḥ can be maintained for the main body of the RV, it is also true that it was slowly being effaced. By the time of the AV, ágah had almost disappeared except in the compound ánāgaḥ. In passages not taken directly from the RV, it occurs in that text only twice (AV XII 4.50 and XIII 3 refr.). Only énaḥ was left to take on both meanings "offense" and "guilt."

If we have committed any offense whatever against the gods or against any comrade at all or against the master of the household, this hymn should be a means of redress for these (offenses).

This verse defines three groups toward which the speaker has certain obligations. First, there are the gods, to whom one must offer worship and praise. Second, there are one's comrades, with whom relationships are freely entered into. Once concluded, however, comradeship involves obligation. Finally, there is the head of the family, to whose authority a member of the family must submit. The passage thus refers to the three types of obligation represented by Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman: authority (of gods), alliance (with comrades), and custom (of the household). Therefore, ágah is any violation of the various requirements in such relationships.

This passage finds a parallel in V 85.7, although the kinds of relationships mentioned in this passage are somewhat different:

V 85.7 aryamaṃ varuṇa mitryāṃ vā
 sákhāyaṃ vā sádāṃ íd bhrátaraṃ vā
 veśāṃ vā nítyaṃ varuṇāraṇaṃ vā
 yát sīm ágaś cakṛmā śísráthas tát

O Varuṇa, if we have committed an offense against any comrade at all, whether one by alliance or one by custom, or against a brother or against a member of the community, whether native or foreign (in origin), o Varuṇa, you shall loosen that (from us).

Mention of offense against the gods is omitted here, for the passage concentrates on the various human relationships which the speaker might violate.

Like I 185.8, the first part of this verse summarizes different possible social relationships by representative examples. The poet mentions a "brother" and two kinds of comrades. The category "brother" includes anyone related by blood. In view of the previous discussion of mitrá,

sákhā mitryāḥ means "comrade by alliance, ally." Possibly this alliance is the marriage contract and the ally is any member of the wife's family. Finally, there is the sákhā aryamyāḥ which means "comrade by custom;" it refers to someone who is not related, but belongs to the same people. The poet, therefore, asks that he be released from the responsibility for offense against any member of society to whom he has obligation, whether he be a relative or not.

Note also the intimate relationship between offenses against such relationships and the Ādityas. Not only is Varuṇa invoked, but also aryamya and mitrya bring Aryaman and Mitra to mind. Because these three gods represent the fundamental principles which govern society, the poet quite naturally thinks of them in seeking forgiveness for violating those principles.

Elsewhere disobedience of the gods is an offense (IV 54.3) and causes guilt (VII 89.5). As in I 185.8, such disobedience might be understood as transgression of the authority of the gods and so would also be an offense against the larger society consisting of gods and men. Specific transgressions of any sort are rarely described, but the RV does mention the violation of a peace treaty (X 132.5) and of a religious vow (I 179.5).⁸ Both involve breaking an agreement, an oath, sworn between men or before the gods. Thus, from the available evidence, āgaḥ and énaḥ belong very much to the sphere of relations governed by Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

The passages in which ādityā occurs with āgaḥ or énaḥ are generally pleas by the poet that the Ādityas protect him from his own offenses. The Ādityas are thereby recognized as divine judges who would otherwise exact vengeance on those who have committed some transgression or would allow

⁸Cf. Thieme 1963: 69ff. I 179 is a Legendenzauber, recited to remove the stain caused by breaking an oath of sexual purity.

the guilt of such offenses to destroy the offender. For the latter, compare VIII 18.12:

VIII 18.12 tāt sú naḥ sárma yachatá
 -dityā yān mómocati
 énasvantaṁ cid énaḥ sudānavah

Offer us that very shelter, Ādityas, which will release even him who carries guilt from (that) guilt, o blessed ones.

The poet hopes that the Ādityas will give him protection so that the natural consequences of guilt, which are disease and death,⁹ will not strike.

The Ādityas can also restore to life the man who is crushed by his guilt. The best example is X 63.8,¹⁰ although in this hymn ādityā refers to the gods in general and not simply to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman:

X 63.8 yá ísire bhúvanasya pracetaso
 vísvasya sthātúr jágataś ca mántavaḥ
 té naḥ kṛtād ákṛtād énasas páry
 adyā devāsaḥ pipṛtā svastāye

Which attentive (Ādityas)¹¹ are masters of creation, the directors of everything which stands and which moves--o gods, save us today from the guilt which has been created and which has not been created (by us) for the sake of our well-being.

The principal difficulty in this verse is the meaning of kṛtād ákṛtād énasas. The kṛtām énaḥ is probably guilt acquired by a personal transgression; whereas ákṛtam énaḥ refers to guilt inherited from another member of one's

⁹Cf. II 28.7 and X 137.1 utá devā ávahitaṁ, devā ún nayathā púnaḥ, utāgas cakruṣam devā, devā jiváyathā púnaḥ "O gods, you, gods, have led up again him who was lost, even him who committed an offense. O gods, you, gods, have made him live again."

¹⁰Cf. also VIII 47.8, 67.17

¹¹Though ādityā does not occur in this verse, it appears throughout this hymn. Cf. vss. 5-7, leading up to this verse.

family. It is the "guilt created by another" (éno anyákṛtam) of VI 51.7 or "generated by another" (anyájātam énaḥ) of VII 52.2.¹²

The Ādityas are invoked not only to remove the guilt or the other evil consequences which arise from offense, but also to protect men from having any offense attributed to them. Thus, in II 29.1, they are begged to keep every kind of offense as far away as possible.

II 29.1ab dhṛtavratā ādityā īṣirā
āré māt karta rahasūr ivāgaḥ

Vigorous Ādityas, whose commandments are upheld, turn away from me into the distance any offense like the (cow, which) bears secretly.

The reason that the poet so urgently wants to avoid offending these gods is implied in the epithet dhṛtavrata "whose commandments are upheld." He knows that these gods demand obedience and that disobedience would result in his provoking their wrath and vengeance.

The same idea is implied when men ask to be made ānāgaḥ "offenseless," as in I 24.15:

I 24.15 úd uttamām varuṇa pāśam asmād
āvādhāmāṃ ví madhyamām śrathāya
āthā vayām āditya vraté tavā
-nāgasō āditaye syāma

Release from us, Varuṇa, the uppermost fetter, the middle, and the lowest (one). So now, o Āditya, under your authority, we would be without offense for the sake of innocence.

In order to recover the state of blamelessness, men must abide in the commandment of Varuṇa. Compare also VII 51.1 in which the Ādityas are asked to

¹²Guilt can be inherited from almost any member of the family. It usually comes from one's parents; cf. II 29.5, in which the poet pleads with the gods not to fasten his guilt on his son, AV V 30.4, and AV VI 116.2. But guilt can also be passed from brothers, sons, or ancestors, cf. VII 86.5, AV VI 116.3, AV X 3.8.

establish the worship anāgastvé adititvé "in offenselessness and blamelessness" and VII 52.1 where the Ādityas are asked to make the poets "innocent." Similar also is VIII 67.7, in which the man who is offenseless is made wealthy by Ādityas. The idea that there is safety if one is "under the commandment of the Ādityas," that is, in obedience to them, recurs in III 59.2f. and VIII 18.1, in which "under the compelling command of the Ādityas" (ādityānām... sāvīmani) substitutes for "under the commandment of the Ādityas."

In summary, ādityā occurs in contexts in which the gods are asked to pardon an offense (āgaḥ) or to relieve guilt (énaḥ). The acts which are "offenses" or which create "guilt" are not specified in such passages. Elsewhere, however, such transgressions are primarily infringements of the principles which govern human behavior. The Ādityas have the power either to exact retribution or to forgive such faults, for they are invoked as those who release from guilt and the consequences of offense. Elsewhere, they protect from offense and maintain innocence.

Opposition to Deception

The Ādityas are called adrúh "without deception" and ádabdhā "unable to be deceived" and are begged to protect the worshipper from acts called drúh or abhidrúh "deception."

The concept of "deception" is quite straight-forward. The deceiver is one who attempts to appear as something other than what he is and to carry out his nefarious plans covertly. Thus, when the owl conceals itself through its nocturnal flight, it is "deceiving:" VII 104.17abc prá yā jīgāti khargā-
leva náktam, āpa druhā tanvām gūhamānā, vavrāñ anantāñ áva sā padīṣṭa "May she who goes at night, like the owl, who hides her person through deceit, fall down into endless depths." So also in V 74.4, a lion-trap is called the

"track of deceit" because the path on which it is concealed appears safe.

The Ādityas are mentioned twice in connection with (abhi)drūh. In II 27.16 the poet begs that the Ādityas not use their weapons which are meant for a deceiver against him:

II 27.16abc yā vo māyā abhidruhe yajatrāh
pāsā ādityā ripāve vicrttāh
āsvīva tāñ āti yeṣaṃ rāthēna

What wonderful powers, worshipful ones, are yours against the deceitful one, (what) fetters, Ādityas, are uncoiled for (capturing) the cheat-- beyond these would I race like a horseman with his chariot.

The second passage asks the Ādityas to protect the poet from the deceit of others which may threaten him:

VIII 47.1a-d māhi vo mahitām āvo
vāruṇa mitra dāsūṣe
yām ādityā abhī druho
rākṣathā nēm aghām naśad

The help of (all) you great ones is great, Varuṇa and Mitra, for him who honors (you). Evil will not reach him whom, Ādityas, you protect from deceit.

No human agency could adequately protect the innocent because humans are vulnerable to deceit. So the poets are acutely aware of the necessity of a divine sanction, like that of the Ādityas, which can see through the acts and purposes of men.

These gods can defend themselves and their worshippers against deception because they are ādabdhā "undeceivable." No deception escapes them:

VIII 67.13 yē mūrdhānaḥ kṣitīnām
ādabdhāsaḥ svāyaśasaḥ
vratā rākṣante adruhaḥ

O Ādityas, who, as heads of the peoples, undeceivable (and) possessing your very own glory, who without deception guard your commandments,

VIII 67.14ab tē na āsnó vṛkāṇām
ādityāso mumócata

free us from the mouth of wolves.

The term "heads of the people" refers to kings, who must themselves act truly and ensure adherence to their commandments. The Ādityas are invoked as kings in order to show they overcome any deception in following the dictates which govern society. In II, 27.4 also, the Ādityas are called "those who protect their lordship" (rākṣamānā asuryām), that is, those who ensure that their power to exact obedience from their subjects remains undiminished. And undoubtedly the same kingly function is the basis for calling the Ādityas cetāro ānṛtasya bhūreḥ... śagmāsaḥ putrā āditer ādabdhāh "the avengers of substantial untruth, the capable, undeceivable sons of āditi" in VII 60.5, as well as ādabdhāh... pāyāvaḥ "undeceivable protectors" in VIII 18.2 and sātpatīñr ādabdhān "undeceivable lords of the household" in VI 51.4

This ability of Ādityas to defeat those who try to subvert their principles is also mentioned in II 27.2-3:

II 27.2 imām stōmaṃ sákratavo me adyā
mitró aryamā vāruṇo juṣanta
ādityāsaḥ śúcayo dhārapūtā
āvṛjinā anavadyā āriṣṭāh

These of one intent, Mitra, Aryaman and Varuṇa, will take pleasure today in this, my hymn of praise, these (who are) Ādityas, pure and clean as streams (of soma), free of any crookedness or disgraceful act and unable to be injured.

II 27.3 tā ādityāsa urāvo gabhīrā
ādabdhāso dīpsanto bhūryakṣāh
antāh paśyanti vṛjinótā sādhu
sārvam rājabyaḥ paramā cid ānti

These broad and deep Ādityas, who have many eyes and (therefore) who are unable to be deceived (and) who will deceive (those who try to deceive them), they see the crooked and the straight, (distinguishing) among them.¹³ Everything, even the furthest things, are near to (these) kings.

As already pointed out by Geiger (1916: 219f.), there is no need to read ádipsantah for dípsantah in vs. 3b, as Hillebrandt (1913: 83) suggested. They are not employing deceit¹⁴ but rather, in that they are undeceivable, anyone who thinks he can delude them is himself deceived.

Support for the Truth and Opposition to Untruth

The emphasis on their ability to discern wrong from right and to escape deception appears also in the Ādityas' opposition to untruth (ánṛta) and their adherence to the truth (ṛtá).¹⁵ As Lüders demonstrated, the significance of calling a god truthful (ṛtāvan) varies with the nature and functions of that god. For example, in many cases, Agni is ṛtāvan because he is the divine hotar, who inspires or sings the true praises of the gods.¹⁶ Uṣas is rtāvarī because she appears daily in accordance with the truth that governs the workings of the universe.¹⁷ It is thus important to examine in what sense truth is used in connection with gods when they are called Ādityas and to notice the relation that truth has to the principles against which men commit offenses.

¹³For the translation of vs. 3c, see Oldenberg Noten I: 209.

¹⁴Cf. VIII 19.34, which invokes the ādityāso adruhaḥ, the "undeceiving Ādityas."

¹⁵Though I have followed Lüders (1951-59) in translating ṛtá as "truth" (Wahrheit), I do not wholly agree with his explanation of its use. He insists strongly on ṛtá as a verbal expression of the truth and on its magic power. But as I see it, ṛtá refers to the truth as the proper structure or real nature of things, as much as the expression which reveals it.

¹⁶Cf. Lüders 1951-59 II: 547.

¹⁷Cf. Lüders 1951-59 II: 549f.

Consider first II 27.4:

II 27.4 dhārāyanta ādityāso jāgat sthā
 devā vīśvasya bhūvanasya gopāḥ
 dīrghādhiyo rākṣamānā asuryam
 ṛtāvānāś cāyamānā ṛṇāni

As the divine protectors of the whole creation, the Ādityas sustain both that which goes and which stands, (these) of long attention, (who) guard their lordship, these truthful ones, (who) avenge debts.

In this verse, each of the roles or qualities mentioned of the Ādityas, gopāḥ... dīrghādhiyaḥ... ṛtāvanah, is intimately connected with one of their functions, dhārāyante... rākṣamānāḥ... cāyamānāḥ. The significance of the "truthfulness" of the Ādityas is thus dependent on cāyamānā ṛṇāni.¹⁸ In the RV, ṛṇā is the repayment required as the result of some exchange. It can mean a monetary debt owed to another person as in VI 12.5 ṛnó ná tāyúr āti dhānvā rāt "Like a thief in debt [that is, "who runs away from his debts"], he has wandered across the deserts" and VIII 47.17ab yāthā kalām yāthā śaphām, yātha ṛṇām samnāyāmasi "As we shall leave over¹⁹ (to our heirs) a small part, an eighth part or a (whole) debt... " Or it can be an obligation to the gods, as in IV 3.13c mā bhrātūr agne ánṛjor ṛṇām veh "Do not, Agni, pursue (us) for the debt of a crooked brother." In II 27.4, therefore, the truthfulness of the Ādityas lies in their concern for the maintenance of the truth of those obligations to men or gods.

So also in IV 1.2, Varuṇa is invoked as the "truthful" Āditya who makes certain that the peoples maintain their proper relationships to one another, and according to I 41.4 the Ādityas aid the man who follows the

¹⁸The expression is an old one: an equivalent is applied to Mithra in Yt X 35 miθrām... arənat.caesəm "Mithra, who avenges debts..." Cf. Thieme 1957a: 53 and 53 n.39.

¹⁹Cf. Oldenberg Noten II 115: "ṛṇām samnāyāmasi: nicht 'Schuld bezahlen,' sondern: sie auf einen andern übertragen (und sich dadurch befreien)."

truth (rtám i), that is, who fulfills his obligations.

This use of rtá and rtāvan complements that of IV 42.4bc dhārāyam dīvaṃ sādāna rtāsyā, rtēna putró āditer rtāvā, in which the truth which the Āditya maintains is that which defines the workings of the world, and of II 27.8c rténādityā māhi vo mahitvām and X 85.1c rténādityās tiṣṭhanti, in which the Ādityas are great or endure through the power of this truth. Also compare VII 85.4 in which Varuṇa is called an Āditya and sukrátur rtacít... hótā "The hotar whose will is good, who understands the truth." These truths of the universe and religion and those of society are not contrasting, but all are parts of one system of truth in which one aspect lends validity to the other aspects. The knowledge that the same power which controls the movement of the sun or the seasons watches over the activities of men makes the sovereignty which governs those activities appear extraordinarily real.²⁰ Thus, if the Ādityas are guardians of the truths of society, they must also be guardians of the truths of the natural world and religion.

The Ādityas are also the avengers of untruth:

VII 60.5 imé cetāro ānrtasya bhūr
mitró aryamā várūṇo hí sánti
imá rtāsyā vāvr̥dhur duroné
śagmāsaḥ putrá āditer ādabdhāḥ

These are the avengers of substantial untruth, for they are Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa. They have grown strong in the house of truth, they are the capable, undeceivable sons of āditi.

As I pointed out earlier, line b might also be translated: "for they are the gods of alliance, custom, and commandment." If so, then the untruth

²⁰On this principle, see below pp. 284ff.

they avenge is disobedience to these principles. To protect the truth, they must be powerful (cf. śagmā) and wise (cf. ādabdhā), for no offense must escape them. Because they are powerful and wise, they rule in heaven, the "house of truth," where the truth which governs both the human and natural worlds is founded.

Or again, the Āditya defeats untruth:

VII 84.4cd prá yá ādityó ānrtā mināty
āmitā súro dayate vásūni

While the Āditya (Varuṇa) frustrates untruths, the hero (Indra) apportions immeasurable goods.

The language of line c is reminiscent of I 32.4b ān māyínām amināḥ prótā māyāḥ "You, (Indra), have likewise frustrated the tricks of the tricky ones" and of I 117.3c minántā dāsyor áśivasya māyāḥ "They frustrated the tricks of the unkind dasyu."²¹ The untruths which Varuṇa is able to overcome are probably also the subtle tricks and deceptions which characterize the enemies of the gods and the poets.

Thus, the Ādityas are perceived as the enemies of many different kinds of human misbehavior. First, they govern the punishment for offense (āgaḥ) and the guilt (énaḥ) which results. They have the power to restore an offender and to protect him from the consequences of offenses. These offenses can be of various kinds, but in general, they constitute the violation of any obligation towards gods or men. Second, the Ādityas are undeceiving and undeceivable. As perfect kings, they allow nothing to escape their attention, and no subterfuge to undermine the principles they uphold. Rather, they punish the deceiver, and guide their true subjects. Third, they support the truth (rtá), that is, they uphold the structures

²¹Cf. also II 34.3.

which define the relation of one person to another. Their power to enforce these obligations is perceptible, for they govern the truth which defines the natural order as well. Since the world follows the truth of the Ādityas, the truth which applies to men must likewise be authoritative.

Protectors of the Righteous

Complementary to their opposition to evil-doing of all kinds, the Ādityas protect those who uphold their principles. Many passages characterize those guarded by the Ādityas as righteous; others merely suggest it. In still others, the Ādityas are invoked to bring safety to the poet and his people, whose innocence is not explicitly stated, but implicitly established through their worship.

The way of behavior which the Ādityas uphold is often called the "path of the Ādityas," which is identical to the "path of truth."²² There is one major difference between the two paths, however: the path of truth is not "easy" as is the path of the Ādityas, for acting in accordance with the truth is no guarantee of safety. It only becomes safe when it is guarded by the Ādityas: VIII 31.13 yāthā no mitró aryamā, varuṇaḥ sánti gopāḥ, sugā rtāsya pānthāḥ "As Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa are (our) protectors, the paths of truth are easy."

This path of truth is called the Ādityan path in I 105.16, which must be taken in conjunction with vs. 6 of that hymn (cf. Oldenberg,

Noten I: 100):

I 105.6a-d kād va rtāsya dharmasí
kād varuṇasya cākṣaṇam

²² Cf. Lüders 1951-59 II: 461ff.

kād aryamṇó mahás pathā

āti krāmema dūḍhyāḥ

(Is there an) enduring (quality) of truth for you? Is the vision of Varuṇa (enduring)? Might we step beyond those of evil intents through the path of great Aryaman?

I 105.16a-d asáu yāḥ pānthā ādityó

diví pravācyam krtāḥ

ná sá devā atikrāme

tām martāso ná paśyatha

Which is yon Ādityan path, made in heaven--(this truth) is to be proclaimed --that (path) is not to be transgressed, o gods. You do not see it, mortals.

This hymn is the plaint of a man in distress. It may be the cry of Trita, who was trapped in a well, as the Indian tradition holds, or a plea for divine help, which employs the example of Trita as a Legendenzauber. In vs. 6, he asks the gods where is their obligation to protect him who has acted properly (cf. vs. 4), or where is their watchfulness since they have permitted this thing to befall him. Might he not expect to pass by such a danger through the path of right conduct, which is in accord with and protected by Aryaman? Similarly in vs. 16, he claims that the path of the Ādityas is inviolable even by the gods, and, though men cannot see this path, it is nonetheless real. On this basis, the poet "summons the gods for help" (vs. 17) because they must protect the Ādityan path, the path of truth.

So also in the following three passages, the poets describe the path of the Ādityas and the safety found there:

II 27.6abc sugó hí vo aryaman mitra pānthā

anṛksaró varuṇa sādhrú ásti

ténādityā ádhi vocatā no

O Aryaman, Mitra, and Varuṇa, your path is easy, free of thorns and straight. Because of this, Ādityas, testify for us.

The poet first declares that the path of truth, guarded by the Ādityas, is protected from any danger for him who follows it. Because this is so, the Ādityas should bear witness that the poet and his people are following the path and should therefore receive the protection they deserve (cf. VIII 67.5-6).

Similarly:

VIII 18.2 anarvāṇo hy èśām
 pānthā ādityānām
 ādabdhāḥ sānti pāyāvaḥ sugevṛdhah

For the paths of these Ādityas are free of hostility. Growing strong on the easy way, (these) protectors are unable to be deceived.

The paths of the Ādityas are free of hostility, for on them the innocent man has nothing to fear. Why is this so? First, because the Ādityas are "undecivable." They will neither wrongly punish the innocent man nor allow him to be subject to others who try to harm him. Second, because the Ādityas are "strong." Not only do they understand who is guilty and who innocent, but they also have the power to stop evil.

And finally:

I 41.4 sugāḥ pānthā anṛkṣarā
 ādityāsa ṛtām yaté
 nātrāvakhādó asti vah

Thornless and easy is the path for him who follows the truth, o Ādityas. There (on that path), there is no destruction from you.²³

²³Geldner (RVÜ I: 51) translates line c as "Auf ihm gibt für euch keine Ermüdung (?)." But this surely cannot render the sense, since the one who travels the path is the man, not the god. Rather, I believe Renou (EVP V: 110), is essentially correct in translating the line: "Là point n'est (à redouter) de destruction de votre part." Possible, however, would be the interpretation of Thieme (1938: 120): "Nicht gibt es auf diesem euren [von euch beschützten] Bedrangung."

Here the Ādityas are specifically charged with making the path of righteousness a safe path. They ensure that there are no obstacles for those who adhere to it. Note that in line c, the poet explicitly states that there is security on the path of truth also because the Ādityas will not take vengeance upon those who follow it.²⁴

Elsewhere, the poets stress not only the safety, but also the prosperity which the Ādityas guarantee to the innocent man. This theme is prominent particularly in II 27:

II 27.9cd āsvapnajo animiṣā ādabdhā
 uruśāmsā ṛjāve mārtyāya

Unsleeping, unwinking and unable to be deceived, they (the Ādityas) bring wide fame to the righteous man.

II 27.11 nā dakṣiṇā ví cikite ná savyā
 nā prācīnam ādityā nótá paścā
 pākyā cid vasavo dhīryā cid
 yusmānīto ābhayaṃ jyótir aśyām

I perceive neither to the right nor to the left, neither forward nor behind, Ādityas. In naivete or in understanding, Vasus, led by you, I would attain the light which is free from fear.

II 27.12abc yó rājabhya ṛtanībhyo dadāśa
 yām vardháyanti puṣṭáyaś ca nítýāḥ
 sá revān yāti prathamó ráthena

Who has served the kings who lead with truth, whom they increase, and (for whom are) enduring prosperities, that person, being wealthy, drives as the foremost in his chariot.

²⁴In the next verse, however, the meaning of the path changes: I 41.5 yām yajñām náyathā nara, ādityā ṛjúnā pathā, prá vaḥ sá dhītáye naśat "Which worship you lead by a straight path, o nobles, Ādityas, that will reach you for the sake of (our) insight." Here the path becomes the route of the offerings and praises as they ascend to the gods. In juxtaposing these two paths, the poet links the success of his worship to the perfection of his ethical as well as ritual conduct.

II 27.13

śúcir apáh sūyāvasā ádabdha
úpa kṣeti vṛddhāvayāḥ suvīraḥ
nákiṣ tām ghanty ántito ná dūrād
yá ādityānām bhāvati prāṇītau

Pure and undeceivable, having good pasturage, his vigor fully developed, and possessing good men, that person dwells near water. Neither from near or from afar do any harm him who is under the leadership of the Ādityas.

Verse 9 introduces this section with the assertion that the Ādityas help the man who is righteous. The perception of the Ādityas, which allows them to look after the innocent man, is contrasted to human weakness in vs. 11. Man needs the help of the Ādityas to preserve him, for in his limited understanding and in his lack of awareness, he is vulnerable. But the key to these verses is really vs. 12, which describes both the proper attitude towards the Ādityas and the reward it brings. There they are called kings, for like the human king they lead men in accordance with truth with the principles they represent. Under that leadership, and thus in obedience to them, a person prospers and becomes wealthy. The man who follows the leadership of the Ādityas is righteous (vs. 13), for he is free from the possibility of committing offense and hence free from attack. Like the path of the Ādityas, therefore, their leadership has a double significance, for he who is under the leadership of the Ādityas obeys their commandment and thereby is guided toward prosperity and life.

Similarly, the protection of the Ādityas is offered to men who do not offend, according to VIII 67.7:

VIII 67.7 ásti devā amhór urv
ásti rátnam ánāgasah
ādityā ádbhutainasah

There exists freedom, o gods, in place of distress and there exists wealth for the offenseless one, for him in whom guilt is unusual, o Ādityas.

The meaning of this verse hangs on the word ádbhutainasah. It is parallel to ánāgasah and therefore must also be gen. sgl., as Oldenberg (Noten II: 128) and Geldner (RVÜ II: 390) interpret it. I understand the adjective ádbhuta as having the sense of "rare" or "remarkable." Therefore, the compound refers to the man who only on rare occasions is guilty of any wrong-doing. Thus ádbhutainah is parallel in meaning, as well as form, to ánāgah "offenseless."²⁵ The meaning of VIII 67.7, then, is that the man who does not offend, upon whom rarely rests any guilt or blame, is the one for whom the gods guarantee "freedom,"²⁶ which represents "prosperity," "successful living" or the like.²⁷

Elsewhere, the innocence of those prospered by the Ādityas is not directly stated, but is implied. Compare, for example, II 27.5:

II 27.5 vidyām ādityā ávaso vo asyá
yád aryaman bhayá á cin mayobhú

²⁵This interpretation of ádbhutainah also explains its other occurrence in V 87.7cd dīrgham prthú paprathe sādma pāṛthivam, yēsām ájmeṣv á mahāh sārđhāmsy ádbhutainasām "The earthly abode is spread out far and wide (for those) in whom guilt is unusual, (and) to whose (earthly abode) the hosts of great (Visnu) [i.e. the Maruts] (come) on their courses." I do not believe that ádbhutainah refers here to the Maruts as Geldner (RVÜ II: 91) and Renou (EVP X: 40), take it, but rather to men. It is men's earthly abode which is extended, not the Maruts. The word yēsām goes with sādma not ájmeṣu in spite of I 37.8. The verse means that those who are not guilty and who offer worship to the Maruts will have an ample place to live.

²⁶Cf. vs. 3 of this hymn: tesām hí citrām ukthyām, várūtham ásti dāsūṣe, ādityānām araṁkr̥te "The bright and praiseworthy protection of these (gods) exists for him who serves (them), for him who acts properly towards the Ādityas."

²⁷Cf. also III 59.2f., addressed to Mitra. According to these verses, when he obeys the commandment of an Āditya, a man is free of any danger, whether from something familiar or foreign (ná... ántito ná dūrāt), whether from men (ná hanyate ná jīyate) or from something non-human (anamivāsah).

yuṣmākam mitrāvaruṇā prāṇītau
pāri śvābhreva dūritāni vrjyām

I would know of that help of yours, Ādityas, which gives comfort even in fear, Aryaman. I would avoid difficulties like precipices under your leadership, Mitra and Varuṇa.

That the poet is under the leadership of the Ādityas suggests more than that he is guided past dangers by them. As in vss. 12 and 13 of this same hymn (see above), it also implies that he is guided into obedience to the Ādityas. Note that prāṇītau is similar to vraté "under the authority." In vs. 2 of the next hymn, II 28, the poet prays that his obedience to the commandment of Varuṇa will bring him good reward: II 28.2ab tāva vraté subhāgāsaḥ syāma, svādhyò varuṇa tuṣṭuvāmsaḥ "May we be of good fortune under your authority, Varuṇa, since we, taking good care, have praised you." To win good fortune under the Ādityas' authority and to avoid difficulties under their leadership is the same.²⁸

Likewise, in VIII 47.4-7, 11, the poet emphasizes both the protection which the Ādityas give and their power over those to whom they give it.

VIII 47.4a-d yāsmā ārāsata kṣāyam
jīvātum ca prācetasah
mānor viśvasya ghéd imá
ādityā rāyá ísate

These Ādityas have control over the wealth of each man to whom the attentive ones have granted a peaceful dwelling and livelihood.

VIII 47.5a-d pāri no vrñajann aghā
durgāni rathyò yathā
syāmed indrasya śārmany
ādityānām utāvasi

²⁸ Cf. also X 126.5-7.

Evils will avoid us like charioteers difficult routes. We would be under the shelter of Indra and under the help of the Ādityas.

VIII 47.6a-d parihvrtéd anā jāno
yuṣmādattasya vāyati
dévā ādabhram āsa vo
yām ādityā áhetana

Through his duplicity, a (deceitful) man is deprived of (the gift) given by you. (But) he whom you have encouraged has obtained no small thing of yours, o Ādityas, o gods.

VIII 47.7a-d ná tam tigmām caná tyájo
ná drāsad abhí tam gurú
yāsmā u śārma saprátha
ādityāso árādhvam

Neither acute nor massive danger²⁹ shall reach him to whom, Ādityas, you have granted extensive shelter.

VIII 47.11a-d ādityā áva hí khyátā
-dhi kúlād iva spásah
sutīrthām árvato yathā
-nu no neṣathā sugám

Ādityas, you have looked down, like spies from a hillside above. As chargers an easy ford, you shall lead us along the easy (way).

In vs. 4, the poet acknowledges that the Ādityas retain power over the

²⁹ The meaning of tyājah was studied by Oldenberg (1901: 281ff.), who argued that the word could not be separated from tyaj "abandon" and tried to confirm a meaning "das Verlassen," "das Preisgeben" in its attestations. Elaborating on Oldenberg's idea, Gonda (1957b: 52f.) explained that tyājah means "abandonment" in the sense of "the act of abandoning" (e.g. in I 119.8) as well as in that of "the state of being abandoned" or "destitution." Benveniste (1954: 21ff.) tried to apply Oldenberg's interpretation to Avestan iōyajah, which had been earlier defined by Bthlm. simply as "danger." These scholars may well be right in their etymological analysis and in arguing that the word may be used occasionally in its etymological sense. But, as in this passage, the meaning of the word has been extended to include any condition of "peril" or "danger."

riches and goods which they have given to men and that they are "attentive" to the affairs of men. So long as the Ādityas remain honored, so long as their principles are upheld, men will prosper. As the first lines of this hymn say: VIII 47.1ab māhi vo mahatām ávo, váruṇa mītra dāsúṣe "Great is the help of you great ones, Mitra and Varuṇa, for him who serves you."

In vs. 5 the poet expresses his wish to be helped by the Ādityas, and in vs. 6, we are told what will cause the Ādityas to withdraw their beneficence. It is duplicity, deceit, and the lack of proper respect for them. On the other hand, the person who is guided and encouraged by the Ādityas will gain no small reward.³⁰ Indeed, he will be made safe from any kind of threat (vs. 7). Finally, according to vs. 11, the Ādityas look down to see that men are not guilty. Having ascertained this, they guide them along the easy way, perhaps the path of truth, protected by the Ādityas.

In other passages, the poets stress the evil of their enemies:

VIII 18.5 té hí putráso áditer
vidúr dvéṣāṃsi yótave
aṃhós cid urucákrayo 'nehásah

The sons of áditi know how to repel hostilities. They who are faultless create freedom from distress.

VIII 18.11 yuyótā sárūm asmád āñ
ádityāsa utāmatim
rdhag dvéṣah kṛṇuta viśvavedasah

Keep the arrow and famine away from us, Ādityas. Keep hostilities apart (from us), o you who possess everything.

The poet emphasizes that the Ādityas are aware of the wrong-doing of the

³⁰Cf. VIII 46.5 dádhanō gōmad ásvavad, suvīryam ādityājūta edhate, sādā rāyā purusprhā "Receiving easy lordship over men as well as cattle and horses, he who is urged along by the Ādityas shines continually through the wealth which is desired by many."

poet's enemies. They must know the wicked intentions of evil men, and they must know how to prevent the realization of such intentions, because they represent the very principles against which such men strive.³¹

The Ādityas' protection from evil intents and hostilities extends into the non-human sphere. As the gods of those principles which guarantee order and tranquility, they must have authority both among men and in the natural world. VIII 18.10, for example, catalogues the different things that endanger life, all of which the Ādityas are asked to keep away.

VIII 18.10 ápāmivām ápa srídham
ápa sedhata durmatim
ádityāso yuyótanā no aṃhasah

Repel sickness, failure, and evil intent. O Ādityas, keep us apart from distress.

In lines ab, the poet gives an example of every way that harm could come to a man. First, there is sickness, an attack from the natural world. Second, there is failure, the inability to follow the gods' demands.³² And finally, evil intent, the ill will of other men.³³ By guarding men against all these, the Ādityas ensure peace and security.³⁴

Finally, the poets petition the Ādityas with prayers for protection in which the blamelessness of the suppliants is not mentioned at all. They are simply pleas for help. Typical are X 63.7c tā ādityā ábhayaṃ sárma

³¹Cf. also I 50.13; VIII 47.1-3, 67.2; X 35.9, 126.7.

³²Cf. X 126.5a ádityāso áti srídhaḥ "Let the Ādityas (lead us) beyond failures." That is, may the Ādityas guide us so that we are not found lacking.

³³Cf. VIII 67.15.

³⁴Cf. I 107.1; VIII 18.5, 67.2, 21, in which the Ādityas are summoned for relief from distress.

yachata "Ādityas, extend shelter which gives freedom from fear,"³⁵ and
 I 25.12bc ādityāḥ supāthā karat, prā na āyūṃṣi tāriṣat "The Āditya will
 create easy paths for us. He will extend our lifetimes."³⁶ Or again,
 with more emphasis on the evils the poet wants to avoid:

I 107.1bcd ādityāso bhāvatā mṛṇāyāntaḥ
ā vo 'rvāci sumatīr vavṛtyād
amhós cid yā varivovīttarāsāt

O Ādityas, become those who show mercy. Your benevolence, which will be a
 good finder of freedom from distress (for us), should turn hither towards
 (us).

Compare also VI 51.5; VIII 31.12, 67.5, 14, 19, etc. In these passages,
 the gods' petitioners assume that the Ādityas know they deserve help.
 Indeed, in recognizing the power of the Ādityas to help and in praying to
 them, the poet acknowledges the authority of these gods and shows his ad-
 herence to the principles they represent.

Ādityas, therefore, protect those who try to do no offense. They both
 guide men past any danger caused by mistakes or misdeeds and guard them from
 those who would do evil. Perhaps the poets' most effective image is the
 "path of the Ādityas," which is the path of truth to which men must adhere
 and the way made secure through the power of the Ādityas. This responsi-
 bility of the Ādityas to guide and protect is closely related to the funda-
 mental characters of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. The powers which represent
 "commandment," "alliance," and "custom" must not only punish those who
 violate these principles, but also protect those who adhere to them.

³⁵So also is X 35.12ab tān naḥ... yachata supravācanām, chardīr ādityāḥ
 ... "Ādityas, offer us this praiseworthy protection."

³⁶Similar are VIII 18.18, 22; X 185.3, in which the poets also beg for
 long lifetimes both for themselves and their offspring.

Rulers of Men

These, then, are the principal functions of Ādityas: They oppose
 antisocial actions, they lead men into justice, and they protect the inno-
 cent from evil. To state these functions in this way suggests an interpre-
 tation of what an Āditya represents. Gods are Ādityas insofar as their
 functions duplicate the activities of the earthly king as the lord and judge
 of his people.³⁷ Like the earthly king, the Ādityas punish (or forgive)
 offenses, guide their subjects' actions, and secure the safety of their
 people against internal enemies. These duties do not, of course, encompass
 the whole responsibility of the Vedic king. Both human kings and their
 divine counterparts are leaders in war (cf. Rau 1957: 100ff.) and are
 responsible for ensuring sufficient and seasonable rain (cf. Rau 1957:
 90ff.). Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman have especially the latter function,
 but not usually when they are called Ādityas. In that context, the "juridical"
 aspects of sovereignty, those aspects which reflect most closely the funda-
 mental natures of the three gods, dominate.

The association of the name ādityā and kingship has been stressed in
 the scholarly literature since the time of Bergaigne. The title rājan and
 other terms denoting kingship are frequently used alongside ādityā. Thus,
 Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are addressed as Ādityas and "kings from old"
 (sanād rājan) in II 27.1 and the gods are called Ādityas and "universal
 kings" (samrājāḥ) in X 63.5.³⁸ So also in VIII 67.1, Ādityas are called

³⁷Because he is the god of commandments, Varuṇa especially is the
 counterpart of the earthly king, who is characterized by his power to command.
 But in that the three gods, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, regulate the way men
 act in society with other men and with the gods, all of them are kings.

³⁸Cf. V 67.1.

kṣatriya "ruling" and in VI 51.4, the Ādityas are kings (rājan) possessing a rule, and lords of the household (sátpati).³⁹

Other passages do more than characterize Ādityas as kings. They also show that Ādityas are kings because they judge human behavior. Thus, in II 27.2f. and VIII 67.13, as divine kings the Ādityas perceive wrong-doing and ensure that such evil is punished. In II 27.12 and X 126.6, they lead their people through the truth, and in II 41.6, III 59.2f., and VIII 27.22, they protect loyal subjects. As kings, the Ādityas sustain the organization of men:

IV 1.2ade sá bhrātaram varuṇam agna ā vavṛtsva
rtāvānam ādityām carṣaṇīdhṛtam
rājānam carṣaṇīdhṛtam

Turn hither, Agni, your brother Varuṇa, the truthful Āditya, who upholds the peoples, the king, who upholds the peoples.

According to this verse, Varuṇa is both a king and an Āditya because he ordains the proper place of different tribes and ensures that they will remain in that place.

Similar to this passage is VIII 19.35, in which Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman, who are called Ādityas in vs. 34, are summoned as the powers who can maintain the peoples and thus help the king:

VIII 19.35 yūyam rājānaḥ kām cic carṣaṇīsaḥaḥ
kṣāyantam mānusān ānu
vayam té vo varuṇa mītrāryaman
syāméd ṛtasya rathyāḥ

O kings, who have power over the peoples, (lead) any one ruling over men. We would be charioteers of your truth, o Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman.

³⁹Cf. also I 20.5; II 28.1; III 54.10; VI 16.24; VIII 101.11ff.

The Ādityas assist the king because they are the gods of the principles which the king must maintain.

Another good example is I 136.3, though the verse presents some difficulties:

I 136.3 jyōtiṣmatīm āditiṃ dhārayátkṣitīm
svārvatīm ā sacete divé-dive
jāgrvāmsā divé-dive
jyōtiṣmat kṣatram āsāte
ādityā dānunas pātī
mitrās taylor varuṇo yātayājano
'ryamā yātayājanah

The two, awake from day to day, accompany the brilliant, shining Aditi, who upholds the peoples, from day to day. The two Ādityas, being lords of blessings,⁴⁰ have attained brilliant rule. Of these two, (one is) Mitra. (But) Varuṇa (also) organizes the peoples. (And) Aryaman (too) organizes the peoples.

The most difficult part of this verse is lines fg. Thieme (1957a: 41) is probably correct in rejecting Geldner's translation,⁴¹ and the attempt by

⁴⁰Renou (1957: 471ff.) tries to show that dānu can not mean "drop," as Grassmann (1873: sp 1534), Mayrhofer (KEW I: 33), and others have taken it. If dānu is not "drop," then sudānu can hardly mean "of good drops," but rather "blessed" either in the sense of giving or possessing blessings. Compare, for example, the use of sudānu in III 26.1cd sudānum devām rathirām vasūyavo, gīrbhī ranvām kuśikāso havāmahe "We Kuśikas, seeking goods, shall invoke (Agni), the blessed god, the charioteer, the pleasing one, with our songs." Here the poet says quite frankly that he wants goods from Agni. That is why Agni is addressed as "blessed." He has power over the things the poet wants and will grant them to those whom he favors. Compare VII 8.3cd where the poet in a similar fashion prays for wealth kadā bhavema pātayaḥ sudatra, rāyó vantāro duṣṭarasya sādhoḥ "When, blessed one, may we be masters of wealth, winners of (the way) which is straight and difficult to overcome (by our enemies)?" Agni is here addressed as sudatra, which certainly does not mean "of good drops," for the same reason he is called sudānu. He has authority over the "blessings" which the poet seeks. The expression pātayo rāyāḥ (cf. also I 68.7; III 7.3; IX 101.6 etc.) in this passage also parallels the phrase dānunas pātīḥ in I 136.3 and shows that dānu can be any sort of "blessing" and not just the rain.

⁴¹Geldner RVÜ I: 191: "Unter ihnen ist Mitra, ist Varuṇa der, welcher die Menschen eint, ist Aryaman der welcher die Menschen eint."

Renou (EVP VII: 32f.) to salvage a similar rendering by arguing that Mitra and Varuṇa are thought of as a unity is unconvincing. Mitra and Varuṇa are always dual and are never identified with one another.⁴² The logic of the verse is rather as follows: There are two Ādityas, who are kings and who, as kings, watch closely that men do not commit offenses. Without the obedience of men to their authority, society would break into chaos. That is why the goddess of innocence, Aditi, who represents obedience to that authority, is described as upholding the peoples. Now then, one of the two Ādityas who keeps men in their proper places is the god of alliances, since alliances do determine relations among men. This is well-known, for Mitra is characteristically yātayājjana "organizing the peoples."⁴³ But this poet wants to emphasize that men are organized not only by alliances, but also by commandments of divine or royal authorities. Hence he is careful to state that the god of commandments is also he who "organizes the peoples." Almost as an after-thought, he then adds that the same is true for the god of customs.

If the Ādityas do exercise the judicial functions of kingship, then this conclusion is of interest for the history of Indian polity. The hymns give little direct information about the political organization of society during the times of the RV. But in his careful work, Das Königtum im Rig- und Atharvaveda, Schlerath has outlined the major aspects of Vedic kingship and demonstrated that the rule of the gods is congruent to the rule of men.

⁴²This, in fact, is the critical objection to Thieme's own translation of these two lines: "Amongst these two (Contract and True-Speech...), Contract (Mitra) is True-Speech (Varuṇa) insofar as he (True-Speech) causes people to make mutual agreements, and Contract is Hospitality (Aryaman) insofar as he (Hospitality) causes people to make mutual agreements."

⁴³Cf. III 59.5, which describes Mitra as mahān ādityāḥ... yātayājjanah "the great Āditya, who organizes the peoples."

He shows that the king was a leader in war and had to maintain the fertility and prosperity of the land, but he does not isolate a specifically judicial function. It would indeed be surprising if the king were not responsible for the maintenance of social relations, for what other mechanism would exist for ensuring social harmony? Furthermore, from the time of the Brāhmaṇas onwards, this was not just one duty of the king, but perhaps his most important.

In the Brāhmaṇas, the king was the personification of the dharma (TB III 9.16.2) and was consecrated as the "protector of dharma" (dharmasya goptā, AB VIII 17.5). So similarly in the Epics, the king later bears the epithet dharmātman⁴⁴ and the early law codes consider the upholding of dharma to be the king's first responsibility.⁴⁵ It was the responsibility of the king, therefore, to act according to dharma⁴⁶ and ensure that his subjects did too, as in Manu VII 44 indriyānām jaye yogam sam ātiṣṭhed divānīsam, jitendriyo hi śaknoti vaśe sthāpayitum prajāḥ "Day and night, he should make an effort in the conquest of the senses, for he whose senses are conquered is able to place his subjects under his will" and Mbh XII 91.3 dharmāya rājā bhavati na kāmakaraṇāya tu, māndhātara evaṃ jānīhi rājā lokasya rakṣitā "The king exists for dharma, not for the satisfaction of his desire. Know thus, Māndhātara: the protector of the world is the king." Or again, the relationship of the king and the dharma in the Epic is stated in Mbh XII 60.19 sveṣu dharmeṣu avasthāpya prajāḥ mahīpatiḥ, dharmeṇa sarvakṛtyāni samaniṣṭhāni kārayet. "Causing his subjects to accede to their own dharmas,

⁴⁴Cf. Gonda 1966: 18f., 68.

⁴⁵Gonda 1966: 19.

⁴⁶Gonda 1966: 33ff.

the great lord should make all things to be done equally dependent upon dharma." In all these passages, the responsibility of the king to maintain the dharma and thereby to act as the foremost upholder of society has highest priority.

This responsibility of the king to maintain the dharma involved many specific duties. First, it was the duty of the king to protect innocent man from evil-doers, who seek to do him harm.⁴⁷ Indeed, Manu states that this was the central duty of the king: Manu VII 144ab ksatriyasya paro dharmah prajānām eva pālanam "The protection of his subjects is the foremost dharma of the ruler." The king must therefore distinguish between his good and evil subjects and honor the former while stopping the latter. Compare Manu IX 253 rakṣaṇād āryavṛttānām kaṇḍakānām ca śodhanāt, narendrās tridivam yānti prajāpālanataparāḥ "By guarding those who act like āryas and by clearing away (men who are like) thorns, those kings whose aim is the protection of their subjects go unto the third heaven."

The principal means through which the king provides this protection is through the punishment of offenders. Thus a second duty of the king in upholding the dharma "consists in punishing internal aggression (such as by thieves and robbers and by persons who invade a man's rights)."⁴⁸ The importance of the duty of the king to punish is stressed by Manu VII 17 sa rājā puruṣo daṇḍaḥ sa netā śāsītā ca saḥ, caturṇām āśramāṇām ca dharmasya pratibhuḥ smṛtaḥ "Punishment personified is the king. He is the leader and he the commander, and he is known as the surety of the four stages of life and of the dharma."⁴⁹ So the king has ultimate responsibility in the

⁴⁷Gonda 1966: 2ff.; Kane 1946: 56f.

⁴⁸Kane 1946: 56.

⁴⁹Cf. Gonda 1966: 16f.; Foy 1895: 30f.; Kane 1946: 21ff.

formal administration of justice. In the Brāhmaṇas, kings preside over courts,⁵⁰ and in later texts, even those judgments which were not made by the king himself required his confirmation.⁵¹

All these functions of the king are paralleled in the description of Ādityas in the RV. Just as the king must exact punishment (Manu VII 17), so also the constant appeals to the Ādityas to release the suppliant from the consequences of offense show that these gods avenge wrongdoing. Again, as the king must fulfill his duties and not violate the dharma (Manu VII 44; Mbh XII 91.3), so also the offenselessness of the Ādityas is praised. Similarly, the Ādityas lead their subjects according to the truth in the same manner as the king ensures that his subjects follow their dharma (Manu VII 44; Mbh XII 91.3, 60.19). And finally, just as protection is the principal duty of the king (Manu VII 144), so the Ādityas are charged with the responsibility to guard their people. No doubt the functions of the king became more elaborate with the growth of society during the times of the Epics and dharma books, but this aspect of the king was important even early in Indian history. Indeed, Benveniste (1969 II: 15) argues that the Indo-European concept of the king, embodied in Latin rex, Irish ri, Continental Celtic rix and Sanskrit rāj, is that of a ruler whose "mission n'est pas de commander, d'exercer un pouvoir, mais de fixer des règles, de déterminer ce qui est, au sens proper, 'droit.'" If so, then the functions of the king represented in Ādityas are not only Indian but Indo-European as well.

⁵⁰Rau 1957: 80f., 96.

⁵¹Foy 1895: 25.

Rulers over the World

Besides their authority in the human sphere, the Ādityas are also rulers over the natural world. There is a fundamental connection between this function and those discussed before. Namely, the Ādityas' authority over the cosmos establishes their authority over the affairs of men and the reality of the principles they uphold. The poet could point to the continuation of the visible world as proof of the powers of these gods whose activities among men were not so visible.⁵²

This process of validating the power of the Ādityas is apparent, for example, in II 27.4:

II 27.4 dhārayanta ādityāso jāgat sthā
 devā víśvasya bhúvanasya gopāh
 dīrghādhiyo rákṣamānā asuryām
 ṛtāvānāś cáyamānā ṛṇāni

As the divine protectors of the whole creation, the Ādityas have sustained both that which goes and which stands, (these) of long attention (who) guard their lordship, these truthful ones, (who) avenge debts.

The first lines announce the general theme of the Ādityas as rulers of the whole universe and of all the creatures in it, and line c stresses the close

⁵²From a reversed point of view, the same use of the powers manifest in the universe as a visible sign of power in the invisible system of retribution is apparent in hymn V 83 to Parjanya, the "thunderstorm." Here is a god whose proper sphere is nature and whose power in that sphere is undeniable. He sends down rain (vss. 3, 4, 8, 10), raises the winds (vs. 4), shatters the air with his lightning (vs. 2), and thunders mightily (vss. 3, 7, 9). But the poet goes further and says that this same violent power also acts against evildoers: V 83.2 ví vṛkṣān hantya utá hanti rakṣaso, víśvam bibhāya bhúvanam mahāvadhat, utānāgā īśate vṛṣṇyāvato, yāt parjanya stanāyan hanti duṣkṛtaḥ "He smashes apart wolves [i.e. threats of all sorts] and he smashes obstructive forces, the whole creation becomes afraid of him who wields the great weapon. And even the man who is without offense flees from him who has the strength of a bull, when Parjanya, thundering, smashes those who do ill." So also cf. vs. 9.

attention these gods give to activities that take place in the world. The practical result of their dominion is specified in the last line. There they are the "avengers of debts."⁵³ This verse thus gives a sense of the gods' power and majesty by describing their vast realm, and then transfers this recognition of authority to the sphere of human relationships.

Later in this same hymn, the poet takes up this idea once again. The first verse of this section, however, poses a number of problems:

II 27.8abc tisró bhūmīr dhārayan trīṇr utá dyūn
 trīṇi vratā vidáthe antár eṣām
 ṛtenādityā máhi vo mahitvām

The translation of this verse depends on the interpretation of line b. First, like Renou (EVP V: 103) and Geldner (RVÜ I: 310),⁵⁴ I believe lines a and b must be separated, because the conjunction utá should have followed trīṇi (vratā) if tisró bhūmīr, trīṇr... dyūn and trīṇi vratā were co-ordinate objects of dhārayan. Its placement with trīṇr... dyūn shows that only the first two are co-ordinated. Second, the parallel pointed out by Geldner, V 59.2d antár mahé vidáthe, makes Renou's attempt to separate antár and vidáthe improbable. Third, eṣām probably modifies not vidáthe (Geldner) but vratā, since the Ādityas, to whom eṣām refers, frequently possess commandments (I 24.15; II 29.1; III 59.2, 3; VI 16.24; VIII 27.3), not a vidátha. Therefore, vratā... eṣām must be the subject, with vidáthe antár dependent upon it, and trīṇi the predicate. Thus the whole verse translates: "They have upheld the three earths and the three heavens. The commandments of these within the ceremony (are) three. Your great greatness is allied with truth, o Ādityas." According to these lines,

⁵³See above, p. 263.

⁵⁴Contrary to Schmidt 1958: 52.

the Ādityas have sustained the total universe and, in a corresponding manner, they have organized the ceremony. Because all this is done in accordance with the truth, the Ādityas' power, their "greatness," is indeed great.

The following verse continues this thought and makes clear why the authority of the Ādityas in these areas is mentioned:

II 27.9 trī rocanā divyā dhārayanta
 hiranyāyāḥ śucayo dhārapūtāḥ
 āsvapnajo animiṣā ādabdhā
 uruśāmsā rjāve mārtyāya

They have supported the three heavenly realms of light, they (who are) golden, clean and pure like the streams (of soma). Unsleeping, unwinking and unable to be deceived, they bring wide fame to the righteous man.

Verse 9 begins with another reference to the Ādityas' cosmic powers and perhaps, in line b, to their ritual purity and participation in the worship. It thus duplicates the structure of vs. 8, but in 9cd, which corresponds to the praise of the Ādityas' "greatness... allied with truth" in vs. 8, the poet stresses the gods' vigilance over human affairs. Actually 8cd and 9cd may express much the same idea, for the truth of the Ādityas is the truth of the principles they represent. Thus, both verses extol the power of the Ādityas over nature in their first two lines and emphasize the Ādityas' power in the human sphere at the end. In so describing them, the poet implies that the powers of the Ādityas manifested in the universe and their presence in the worship establish their ability to enforce principles of behavior and give those principles a persuasive authority.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Cf. also II 28.4-5, which shows the same pattern. In vs. 4ab, Varuṇa, who is called an Āditya, determines the course of the rivers according to the truth, which determines the natural order. But in 5ab, the poet acknowledges the truth of Varuṇa as the standard for his own life. Again, the truth controlling the natural world is revealed as the truth in the world of men.

The lordship of the Ādityas over the natural world, however, can serve to emphasize their ruling power in general without specifically mentioning their rule over men. Compare, for example, V 69.4:

V 69.4 yā dhartārā rājaso rocanāsyo
 -tādityā divyā pāṭhivasya
 nā vām devā amṛtā ā minanti
 vratāni mitrāvaruṇā dhruvāṇi

The immortal gods do not violate the enduring commandments of you two, o Mitra and Varuṇa, heavenly Ādityas, you who are upholders of the realm of light and of the earthly (realm as well).

Though not directly mentioned, the rule of the Adityas over men is implied in these lines: how much less will men dare to challenge the commandments of these gods if even the gods would not dare to do so?

Summary and Conclusions

Three points, therefore, have emerged in this discussion. First, the Ādityas have the power to judge human actions and subsequently either to punish or to forgive men. They are opposed to offense and guilt, but they release those who acknowledge their authority and beg their forgiveness. For the deceitful one, the one who intentionally acts dishonestly and deviously, the Ādityas show no mercy. From him and from the man who is untrue, the Ādityas exact vengeance. The Ādityas are proclaimed as the truthful ones, and they will sustain the ways of truth against all those who would violate them.

Second, the Ādityas guide and guard those who are obedient to them. They ensure that the righteous man will not come to any harm. They show men the right way to act and guarantee prosperity to the obedient.

Third, the Ādityas are kings, who have authority to rule over men. According to the dharma-books, the king was the final arbiter of justice and held the responsibility to punish offenders and protect the guiltless. This duty parallels the functions of Ādityas, and therefore the role of the Ādityas is a reflection of this particular aspect of kingship.

Besides their rule over men, the Ādityas are lords over the natural world. Such descriptions, however, serve to establish the Ādityas' rule over men. By asserting that these gods have power over the visible and orderly workings of the world, the poets make persuasive the authority of the Ādityas in the less obvious regulation of society.

What then is the word ādityá? Study of áditi and ādityá indicated that it might be a name meaning "offspring of Aditi" or an adjective describing them in some way, or both. These observations on its use suggest that it is a descriptive epithet, for it is consistently employed when Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman act as divine kings, who govern man's behavior in society.

To establish this conclusion, there must be definable contexts in which Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are not called Ādityas. I believe there are two such contexts. First, Aryaman is never called an Āditya when he blesses a marriage or establishes a household. The avoidance of ādityá in this case can be explained if the word refers to the rule of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman over men as kingly judges. Aryaman's role in the household, while an important one, does not directly involve the maintenance of the social order in general and would not be an appropriate responsibility of the king. Hence, he is neither king nor Āditya in this function.

Second, ādityá does not usually describe Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman when they are bringers of rain. It is certainly true that their lordship

over the rain is ultimately connected with their rule over men, as established in the discussion of Varuṇa as lord of the waters. Still, sending the rain is not an immediate expression of their role as judges, and therefore ādityá is rare in this context. Nor is this a coincidence. Though the majority of "rain hymns" to Mitra and Varuṇa are in the fifth maṇḍala, in which the word ādityá is rarely attested, the distribution of the theme of rain and ādityá is significant. Thus, in V 67, the poet begins by addressing Mitra and Varuṇa as Ādityas and then praises them as those who have attained the highest rule (vs. 1), as the upholders of the peoples (dhartārā carṣaṇīnām, vs. 2), as those who follow their commandments (vs. 3), and as truthful ones (vs. 4). Never a word is mentioned about their lordship over the rain. The next hymn, however, takes up the theme of rain (e.g. V 68.2, 5), and the word ādityá never occurs. In vs. 2 of the hymn following that, V 69, the poet invokes Mitra and Varuṇa as those who "streams give honey-rich (milk)" (mādhumaḍ vām sīndhavo mitra duhre). But then he drops this theme in vs. 3, in which he calls on the two gods for well-being and life for himself and his offspring, and in vs. 4, in praising their inviolable power, he calls them Ādityas.

Similarly, in the eighth maṇḍala, where ādityá is frequently attested, there are occasional references to the rain-bringing powers of Mitra and Varuṇa, which are again in complementary distribution with ādityá. Thus VIII 25.5-6, 14 describe Mitra and Varuṇa as bringers of rain and in VIII 41.2, Varuṇa is said to dwell at the source of rivers (yāḥ sīndhūnām upodayé), but in neither of these hymns are Mitra and Varuṇa called Ādityas.

If ādityá describes these gods, then what does it mean? As I argued before, if áditi denotes some principle, then "son of áditi" could be a

descriptive phrase like sūnúḥ sáhasaḥ and ādityá a secondarily derived adjective to áditi. Since áditi means "innocence, blamelessness" and "son of áditi" and ādityá are descriptive terms, then they must characterize the gods as having some relationship to "innocence." Unfortunately, both "son of innocence" and a secondary adjective of the type ādityá have several possible interpretations. In the initial discussion of "son of áditi," I cited a number of phrases of the type sūnúḥ sáhasaḥ. In most cases, the genitive expresses a principle manifested in the god's character. Agni is sūnúḥ sáhasaḥ "son of strength" usually because he manifests strength. Thus in III 1.8, Agni is called "son of strength" and in vs. 22, he is addressed as the "strong" one (sahasāvan).⁵⁶ Likewise, Mitra and Varuṇa are the sūnúḥ dākṣasya "sons of skill" because they are skillful. But, on the other hand, in I 42.1, Pūṣan is addressed as vimúco nāpāt "son of release," not because he is released but because he controls or grants release: I 42.1ab sám pūṣann ádhvanas tira, vy ámho vimuco napāt "O Pūṣan, take (us) successfully across the roads, but halt distress, o son of release." Compare also VIII 4.15, in which Pūṣan is addressed as vimócana, "releaser." Hence, "son of áditi" might mean "manifesting innocence," "granting innocence," or "upholding innocence." Nor does the shape of ādityá as a secondary adjective help to determine its exact meaning. Such adjectives with extended grade and a -ya- suffix have a variety of meanings.⁵⁷

The only means out of this impasse is to consider again the use of ādityá in context. I tried to show that Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are Ādityas insofar as they act as judges of the good and evil intentions and actions of men. It would be possible to interpret ādityá and "son of áditi"

⁵⁶So also cf. VI 15.3, in which sūnúḥ sáhasaḥ appears and vs. 12, in which sahasāvan occurs, both of Agni.

⁵⁷Cf. Altind. Gr. II, 2 §656a, §39a, pp. 817, 129.

as "manifesting innocence, innocent" in this context, for they might serve as judges because they themselves are without fault. Recall that the dharma-literature does hold that a king must be without fault in order to maintain order among his subjects.

But an alternative interpretation is more attractive. If, as Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman primarily act to support the righteous and to oppose those who offend, then they are maintaining the standards of innocence. They are "upholding innocence," making it a real principle and a vital condition to be attained. Since "upholding innocence" is a possible interpretation of "son of áditi" and ādityá, I find it the best definition of these two terms.

This interpretation of ādityá and "son of áditi" appears even more likely in view of the relationship of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman to the concept of áditi "innocence" and to Aditi, who is Innocence herself. In VI 67.4, for example, Mitra and Varuṇa are said to be born as the defenders of Aditi. The idea is not that the two gods are themselves innocent, but rather that they support innocence against the "cheating mortal" who would violate it. Or again, in X 132.6, because Mitra and Varuṇa have the goddess of innocence as their mother, they will recognize and reward the innocence they find among men. The emphasis is not on the innocence of the gods, but on the fact that they recognize innocence and support it. Similarly, in I 24.14, the poet hopes that he may be in obedience to the commandment of Varuṇa, for he knows that such adherence to the principles upheld by the god will make him innocent. Finally, in V 62.8, Mitra and Varuṇa are said to watch over "guilt and innocence" (áditim dítim ca) among men, in order to uphold innocence and defeat guilt. In all these cases, and in the many others that could be cited, Mitra, Varuṇa, and

Aryaman maintain the standards of innocence without reference to their own inherent innocence.

Finally, this interpretation of ādityá as "upholding innocence" and as describing Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as royal judges also confirms the interpretations of these three gods. According to our previous analyses, the basic character of each of them is defined by a principle which organizes human relationships. Ādityá, which is their distinctive and characteristic epithet, thus emphasizes not just a function which they all happen to share. Rather, it points directly to the common element in the fundamental characters of the three. They are ādityá-s, upholders of innocence, sovereign judges, precisely because they are the gods of the principles which govern human behavior and human relationships. The epithet reveals the nature of these gods and makes explicit the bond which unites them so closely.

THE OTHER ĀDITYAS

In addition to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, a few other gods are occasionally called Ādityas in the RV. This provides a test for the hypothesis that Āditya describes gods when they act as judges and rulers of men. Is there evidence that these gods other than Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman who bear this epithet have this same function? Or are there other reasons for the use of this term with these deities?

The Viśve Devāḥ

Perhaps the most surprising is the use of ādityá to describe "all the gods" (viśve devāḥ) in X 63. According to the *anukramaṇī*, the hymn is dedicated to the Viśve Devāḥ, who are addressed directly in vs. 6. But throughout most of the hymn, the invocations are to the Ādityas, alone in vss. 2, 3, 5, 7, 13, and 17, and together with Aditi in vss. 2, 3, and 5. The identity of these Ādityas is never specified, and, besides Aditi, the gods mentioned in this hymn are Indra, Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, Heaven and Earth, and the Maruts. Vss. 5-7 demonstrate that ādityá refers to all the gods, for the poet talks about the Ādityas in vs. 5, but then addresses "all the gods" in vs. 6 and the Ādityas in vs. 7.

At least two factors probably encouraged this development. As I noted in the chapter on Aditi, that goddess was developing into a mother of the gods in general, and so perhaps the gods in general assumed the distinctive epithet of her sons. Also, in this hymn the gods perform the functions otherwise characteristic of Ādityas. In vs. 4, they are those who "unwinking, watch over men" and who are "without offense" (nṛcákṣaso ánimiṣantaḥ...

ánāgasah). The poet begs them for rescue from malicious deviousness in vs. 11b (trāyadhvaṃ no durévāyā abhihrútaḥ) and from any other danger in vss. 7 and 12. Like Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, these Ādityas guide their subjects beyond any difficulties (viśvāni duritā, vs. 13). In that the gods thus watch over men as rulers and oppose evil-doing, they are Ādityas.

Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus

X 63, which describes the gods in general as Ādityas, is different from another, large group of verses in which the Ādityas are seen as an unspecific group of gods, which is one segment of the totality of gods. This is the significance of ādityā in the common phrase "Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus," which occurs altogether 17x in the RV.¹ A few examples illustrate the context of this phrase: X 150.1c ādityāi rudrāir vāsubhir na ā gahi "Come hither to us, (Agni), together with the Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus;" X 66.4cd devāñ ādityāñ āvase havāmahe, vāsūn rudrān... "For help we summon the gods-- the Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus;" VI 62.8cd tād ādityā vasavo rudriyāso, rakṣoyūje tāpur aghām dadhāta "Ādityas, Vasus, and Rudras, create then a terrible affliction for the ally of obstructiveness."

This use of ādityā is a significant departure from its usual employment. This is most palpable in those passages in which Mitra and Varuṇa are distinguished from the Ādityas; cf. II 31.1ab asmākam mitrāvaruṇāvataṃ, rātham ādityāi rudrāir vāsubhiḥ sacābhuvā "Do you two, Mitra and Varuṇa, together with the Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus, help our chariot." Compare also III 20.5cd asvīnā mitrāvaruṇā bhāgaṃ ca, vāsūn rudrāñ ādityāñ ihā huve "I

¹RV I 45.1; II 31.1; III 8.8, 20.5; VI 62.8; VII 10.4, 35.6, 14; VIII 35.1, 101.15; X 48.11, 66.3, 4, 12, 125.1, 128.9, 150.1, cf. also AV VI 68.1; VIII 8.12; X 7.22; XI 6.13; XII 2.6; XIX 9.11; XX 135.9.

summon hither the Āsṁins, Mitra and Varuṇa, and Bhaga, the Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas." That "Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus" is an expression for the gods generally is assured by I 45.1, 2 tvām agne vāsūñr ihā, rudrāñ ādityāñ utā, yājā... trāyastriṃsatam ā vaha "Agni, worship here the Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas. Convey hither the thirty-three gods." The reference to the traditional number of gods in vs. 2 shows that the Vasus, Rudras, and Ādityas in vs. 1 comprise them all.²

There are also variations on this phrase, but none of particular significance. X 98.1 mentions the Vasus, Ādityas, and Maruts (cf. AV VI 74.1 and X 9.8) and VIII 44.4, the Vasus, Ādityas, and Āṅgirasas (cf. AV II 12.4). Besides triplets, there are also pairs of groups. For example, the Vasus and Rudras occur in VII 5.9cd ... naḥ sārma yacha, rudrēbhir agne vāsubhiḥ sajōṣāḥ "Offer us shelter, Agni, in harmony with the Rudras and Vasus" (cf. also I 58.3 and VIII 54 (Vāl. 6).3).

Although a few of these passages may be from the early and middle periods of the RV, most of the occurrences of "Rudras, Vasus, and Ādityas" are concentrated in the latest hymns of the RV. In the AV, this collection or its variants account for approximately half of the references to the Ādityas (in the plural). Therefore, this must be a late, although increasingly favored, use of Āditya, which may not reflect the meaning of the word in the other parts of the RV.⁴

²Cf. also X 48.11, 66.4, 12.

³Similar is the combination of Vasus and Ādityas in AV VIII 1.16, of Ādityas and Viśve Devāḥ in AV XV 2.1, and of Ādityas and Maruts in AV X 9.10.

⁴Indeed, a warning against drawing conclusions about the significance of Āditya from these passages also emerges from the obvious distortion of the meanings of Vasu and Rudra. These are both properly adjectives, and the same gods could be called both Vasus and Ādityas. Cf. II 27.11, VII 52.2; VIII 18.15, 17; X 126.8.

This development is probably an early attempt to organize the R̥gvedic gods into a systematic pantheon. The division of the gods into three groups is also reflected in the traditional number of the gods, thirty-three (cf. III 6.9, etc.), which is explained as three times eleven (VIII 35.3, etc.). The later tradition, already anticipated in I 139.11, which assigns the gods to heaven, atmosphere, and earth, is a direct continuation of this process. Apparently, Āditya, Vasu, and Rudra, because they were terms which described gods collectively, were conscripted as designations for groupings of gods produced by these attempts at systematization. There is no evidence that the poets took any real regard for the meaning of these words in so using them.

But this development of Āditya into a name for a sub-group of the gods did have further consequences. Because ādityá was so clearly associated with āditi for the poets of the Vedic hymns, the goddess Aditi was occasionally described as if she stood at their head, as in VI 51.4d ādityān yāmy āditiṃ duvoyú "Seeking friendship, I beseech Aditi and the Ādityas" and VII 51.2a ādityāso āditir mādayantām "Let Aditi and the Ādityas rejoice."⁵ This motivated attempts to establish other divinities with the other groups. Thus, Rudra stands at the head of the Rudras in X 64.8, and, to give the Vasus a leader and to provide a place for the most important god of the RV, the poet summons Indra with the Vasus in VII 47.2.⁶ In VII 10.4 and X 66.3, the poets invoke all three combinations together,⁷ and in VII 35.6

⁵Cf. also I 107.2; X 63.5, 17, 65.9; AV XVIII 3.27.

⁶See also VIII 52 (Vāl. 4).7, below.

⁷In X 66.3 tvāstā... gnābhiḥ is also added. The poet thus provides a place for the goddesses, which he felt were left out of the scheme of Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus.

the same triple combination is repeated but with Varuṇa substituted for Aditi.⁸ Finally, there is even a union of the most important god with the most important group of gods in X 157.2, in which Indra is joined with the Ādityas. This combination of Indra and the Ādityas is also reflected in the identification of Indra as an Āditya in a hymn of the R̥gvedic apocrypha:

VIII 52 (Vāl. 4).7 kaḍā caná prá yuchasy
 ubhé ní pāsi jānmanī
 túriyāditya hávanam ta indriyám
 ā tasthāv amṛtam diví

You never relent. You protect both races [i.e. gods and men]. O fourth Āditya, the Indrian summons is yours. It has mounted to the immortal one in heaven.

I see no indication of a connection between the usual functions of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as Ādityas and Indra. Ādityá is little more than an honorific.

Equally unexpected as the transformation of Indra into an Āditya is the identification of his cohorts, the Maruts, as Ādityas in X 77.2:

X 77.2 śriyé máryāso añjīñr akr̥vata
 sumārutam ná pūrvīr āti kṣāpah
 divás putrása étā ná yetira
 ādityāsas té akrā ná vāvṛdhuḥ

For beauty the young men have put on their ornaments surpassing the many nights (in beauty), like the good band of Maruts (which they are). Like deer, the sons of heaven have arrayed themselves. The Ādityas, like... ,⁹ have grown.

The term Āditya occurs again in vs. 8 of this hymn: X 77.8ab té hí yajñēsu

⁸Cf. also AV XIX 17.4, 18.4, 56.4.

⁹Geldner (RVÜ I: 201f.) describes akra as "ein besonders grosses Tier, also fur Ross oder Elefant." For other possibilities, cf. also Renou EVP X: 111.

yajñīyāsa ūmā, ādityēna nāmnā śāmbhaviṣṭhāh "For these are the worshipful helpers in the worship ceremonies, the best bringers of well-being with the Ādityan name." In neither vs. 2 or vs. 8, however, are the functions of the Maruts distinctive enough to determine why they are called Ādityas. The poet shows in vs. 8 that he is aware that it is unusual to call the Maruts Ādityas, but he does not make clear what about the Maruts gives them the character of Ādityas. I suspect, however, that the missing connection between the Maruts and the Ādityas is the god Varuṇa. In VIII 41.4, the Maruts are invoked along with Varuṇa, probably because of their common association with the waters (cf. vss. 2, 8, and 9). Likewise, according to the later ritual texts, Varuṇa and the Maruts together receive worship at the Cāturmāsya-offerings (cf. Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 293f.). Perhaps because of such a functional or ritual link with Varuṇa, the poet sees the Maruts as Ādityas. In this case, the term Āditya itself has no particular meaning and serves only to designate that group of gods which is led by Varuṇa (cf. VII 35.6).¹⁰

The Minor Ādityas

In addition to the often undefined groups of gods which are called Ādityas, several individual gods besides Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman bear this epithet and in the later tradition came to be known as Ādityas. The most important of these "minor Ādityas" are named in II 27.1:

II 27.1 imā gīrā ādityébhyo ghṛtāsnuh
 sanād rājabhyo juhvā juhomi

¹⁰Geldner (RVÜ II: 259), in commenting on vs. 8, suggested that the Maruts bear the "Ādityan name" because they are "helpers" and "the best bringers of well-being." These are characteristics of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as Ādityas, but are they so distinctively associated with that term that the Maruts would adopt the name Āditya?

śṛṇótu mitró aryamā bhágo nas
tuviajāto váruṇo dākṣo áṁśah

With my tongue I pour out these songs laden with ghee to the Ādityas, kings of old. Let Mitra hear us. (Let) Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuṇa, who is born of strength, Dakṣa and Aṁśa (hear us).

The problem is to determine why these other gods are listed as Ādityas alongside Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

Dakṣa

Dakṣa finds a place in traditional lists of minor Ādityas, but to include him is misleading. Aside from II 27.1, dākṣa is personified in a very limited number of passages in the RV. Besides X 72.4, 5, discussed above (pp. 242ff.), there exists only I 89.3, in which Dakṣa is summoned along with Bhaga, Mitra, Aditi, Aryaman, Varuṇa, Soma, the Aśvins, and Sarasvatī.¹¹ Nowhere else but in II 27.1 is he called an Āditya, and, even though this hymn does name him as an Āditya in the beginning, the only Ādityas mentioned elsewhere in the hymn are Varuṇa, Mitra, and Aryaman. All this suggests that dākṣa is not really an Āditya or even a god for the most part. Nevertheless, dākṣa does belong to the sphere of ideas associated with the gods who are characteristically Ādityas.

The exact meaning of dākṣa (or dākṣah) has not been clearly established,¹² but "skill," in the sense of a capacity or understanding which enables someone to accomplish something, approximates it. The word is most often associated with Agni in the RV, but also not rarely with Soma, Indra, as well as Mitra and Varuṇa. These latter are extolled as those who have the great skill needed to carry out their task of watching over the affairs of men.

¹¹In X 5.7 and 64.5, dākṣa may also be personified, but it is much more likely an adjective describing Agni. I am also excluding VII 66.2, in which the Ādityas are called those "whose father is skill" (see pp. 194f.).

¹²Cf. Renou 1958: 31f.

So, for example, are I 15.6 yuvām dākṣam... dūlābham... āśāthe "You two have attained a skill which is difficult to deceive;" III 62.27b mahnā dākṣasya rājathah "You two rule in accordance with the greatness of your skill;" and V 68.4ab ṛtām ṛtēna sápanṭeṣirām dākṣam āśāte "By serving the truth with the truth, these two attained forceful skill" (cf. also I 151.4). Not only do these two gods possess skill but they are invoked to bring it (I 2.9, 151.3; VIII 42.3). As noted above, they are even called "sons of skill" (sūnū dākṣasya) in VIII 25.5 and those "whose father is skill" (dākṣapitarā) in VII 66.2.

It is this skill of Mitra and Varuṇa which is personified and invoked together with them in I 89.3. And it is this very same skill which not only accompanies the two in II 27.1, but which also is called Āditya. There is, however, one further link between Mitra and Varuṇa and Dakṣa, which was probably instrumental in the representation of Dakṣa as a god and an Āditya. Because Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman represent and govern abstract principles, the feeling is that other gods grouped with them ought likewise to be representatives or personifications of concepts.¹³ Because Dakṣa is such a personification, he was a natural choice to become an Āditya along with Mitra and Varuṇa.

Bhaga

Like Dakṣa, Bhaga is also named an Āditya by Indian tradition, though in this case with much greater justification, for unlike dākṣa, bhāga is often the name of a god. One entire hymn, VII 41, is devoted mainly to Bhaga, and he is invoked as a god more than sixty times in the RV (Macdonell 1897: 45). Also unlike Dakṣa, Bhaga is called an Āditya

¹³Cf. Thieme 1970a: 401f.

several times. Bhaga is probably to be included among the Ādityas in VI 51.3f.:

VI 51.3abc stuṣā u vo mahā ṛtasya gopān
āditiṃ mitrām varuṇam sujātān
aryamānam bhāgam...

I shall praise for you the protectors of great truth--Aditi, Mitra and Varuṇa, who is nobly born, Aryaman and Bhaga.

VI 51.4d ādityān yāmy āditiṃ devoyū

Seeking friendship, I beseech Aditi and the Ādityas.

The group of gods which includes Bhaga in vs. 3 is the same group which the poet addresses as Ādityas in vs. 4. Compare VIII 18.3, in which savitā bhāgaḥ is named as an Āditya along with Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

Bhaga is also once referred to as a "son of āditi" in VII 41.2:

VII 41.2 prātarjītam bhāgam ugrām huvema
vayām putrām āditer yó vidhartā
ādhrās cid yām manyamānas turās cid
rājā cid yām bhāgam bhakṣīty āha

We would summon the fierce Bhaga, who conquers early in the morning, the son of āditi who is the ordainer, to whom one says, be he a poor man or even one who thinks himself powerful or even a king, "Give me a portion."

Why is Bhaga identified as an ādityā or son of āditi? What does this god represent and what is his relationship to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman?

Fortunately, the meaning of Bhaga is relatively clear. Approximately twenty times bhāga is used in its appellative sense of "fortune."¹⁴ Bhaga is thus the god of fortune or the personification Fortune which brings wealth to men.¹⁵ Although Bhaga is called an Āditya and is often linked with Mitra,

¹⁴Oldenberg (1915[1916]; 361ff.) argues that bhāga is never a concrete noun "Reichtum," but in the older language is always "etwas, das Gunst verschafft" (364), "eine glückliche Disposition, die Reichtum... verschafft" (363), or "das Glück, das man in seinem Erleben und Tun zu haben wünscht" (371).

¹⁵Oldenberg 1915 (1916): 366ff.

Varuṇa, and Aryaman, he is not so closely bound to them as they are to one another. He remains independent and is often compared to or joined with other gods. Indeed, the gods with whom he most often appears are not Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, but Pūṣan and Savitar. The association with Pūṣan is probably "based upon their roles as dispensers of nourishment and prosperity,"¹⁶ This same explanation also accounts for the link between Bhaga and Savitar. Consider, for example, II 1.7bc tvām devāḥ savitā ratnadhā asi, tvām bhāgo nṛpate vāsva īśiṣe "You, (Agni), are the god Savitar who bestows treasure. O lord of men, as Bhaga, you possess mastery over goods" and III 62.11 devāsya savitūr... pūramdhyā, bhāgasya rātīm imahe "Through the generosity of the god Savitar, we beg the wealth of Bhaga." The two concepts of "fortune" and "compelling"¹⁷ are even identified in V 42.5a devó bhāgaḥ savitā rāyāḥ... "The god Bhaga, the compeller of wealth..." and V 48.5cd nā... vidma... yāto bhāgaḥ savitā dāti vāryam "We do not know for what reason Bhaga, the compeller, will grant what is desirable." Similar are also V 82.1; VII 38.1, 6; VIII 102.6.¹⁸

Elsewhere Bhaga appears beside the more important gods of the RV, and the kind of fortune he represents reflects the different characters of these gods. Thus with Indra, Bhaga is the good fortune which men seek in conflict or contests of any kind, as in III 49.3c bhāgo ná kārē hávyo matīnām "(Indra) who, like Bhaga, is to be summoned with hymns in the contest..."¹⁹ V 33.5cd

¹⁶Atkins 1941: 26.

¹⁷For the meaning of savitār, see the section on the god Savitar below.

¹⁸Bhaga and Savitar appear in close proximity or as names for one deity, also in I 44.8; II 38.10; III 20.5, 56.6; IV 55.10; V 46.3, 49.1, 82.3; VI 50.1, 13; VII 15.12, 66.4; X 31.4, 85.36, 92.4; cf. AV II 26.2; III 12.4; VI 4.2, 53.1, 103.1; XIV 1.51, 53; XIX 49.1.

¹⁹matīnām is dependent on havyah, cf. Oldenberg 1915 (1916): 370 n.1 and Delbrück 1888: 398.

āsmāñ jagamyāt... bhāgo ná hávyah prabhṛthēṣu cāruḥ "(Indra) should come to us, the dear one who, like Bhaga, is summoned in the conflicts," and VIII 61.5cd bhāgaḥ ná hí tvā yasāsam vasuvīdam, ānu sūra carāmasi "We serve you, o hero, the glorious one who, like Bhaga, finds goods."²⁰ Compare the similar expressions in I 62.7; III 36.5; and VIII 54 (Vāl. 6).5.²¹

Similarly, Agni and Bhaga are compared or equated with one another. In these passages, the "fortune" which Bhaga represents is usually the fortune which Agni wins for the worshipper from the gods: III 20.4ab agnīr netā bhāga iva kṣitīnām, dāivīnām devā rtupā rtāvā "The truthful god Agni, who protects the proper occasions, is, like Bhaga, the leader of the peoples devoted to the gods." Agni brings the gods to worship, which enables and induces them to reward the worshipper. Similar also is VI 13.2a tvām bhāgo ná ā hí rātnam iṣe "You are Bhaga, for you (bear) hither to us treasure for strength." Here Agni himself is Bhaga, the agent who brings the reward of the worship. In still other passages, Agni, like Indra, is described as "Fortune" in contests, though these are not contests of warriors but of priests. Agni will help the worship of him whom he chooses to be favored by the gods: I 141.10cd tām tvā nú návyam... bhāgaḥ ná kārē... dhīmahi "We would now receive you anew, (Agni), who are like Bhaga [Fortune] in the contest." Similar conceptions of Agni as good fortune also appear in I 141.6, 11, 144.3; II 1.7; III 54.21; V 16.2.^{22, 23}

²⁰Cf. X 42.3d vasuvīdam bhāgaḥ indrā bhārā naḥ "Bear hither to us, Indra, fortune which finds goods."

²¹Indra and Bhaga are both summoned or addressed in I 90.4, 136.6; V 42.5, 46.2, 3; VI 38.2, 51.11; VII 40.2, 41.1, 44.1; IX 109.1; X 35.10, 63.9, 92.4; AV III 12.4; VI 111.4; XII 1.40.

²²Agni and Bhaga are also summoned in I 136.6; III 20.5; V 46.2, 3; VI 44.1, 50.1; X 63.9.

²³Motivated in the same way as these identifications of Agni and Bhaga is also the equation of Soma and Bhaga. Cf. IX 97.55c āsi bhāgo āsi dātrāsya (contd.)

The passages in which Bhaga is associated with the Ādityas differ from these in one very noticeable way. Whereas Agni, Indra, and Soma were said to be like Bhaga, this is never said of any of the Ādityas. Bhaga often stands beside them, but he is never identified with them. Thus, in addition to II 27.1, VII 41.2 and VIII 18.3, he is named with Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman in I 89.3; IV 3.5, 55.10; VI 50.1, 51.3; VII 40.2; VIII 19.16; X 93.4. With Mitra and Varuṇa in I 14.3, 136.2; II 20.5; V 42.1, 46.2, 3; VII 41.1; IX 7.8, 61.9; X 35.10, 63.9, 92.4. With Mitra and Aryaman in VII 66.4. With Varuṇa in I 123.4. With Mitra in IX 109.1. With Aryaman in IV 30.24; VII 35.2; IX 81.5, 108.14; X 31.4, 68.2, 85.23, 36; 141.2. With the "Ādityas" in I 14.3; VII 44.1

Most of these passages are colorless, but in a few, the character of Bhaga clearly conforms to those of the Ādityas. Thus in VI 51.3, Bhaga, Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman are called the "protectors of great truth" (mahā ṛtasya gopān) and those "whose thoughts are never deceived" (ādabdhadhī-tayaḥ). Bhaga is probably also one of the Ādityas mentioned in vs. 4 who are described also as "lords of the household" (sātpatayaḥ), "undecivable" (ādabdhāḥ), "great kings" (mahó rājānaḥ), "givers of good pasture" (suvasanāsyā dātārah) and those "whose rule is good" (suksatrāḥ). In short, Bhaga is a divine king who guards the peace of his realm.²⁴ Also in IV 3.5²⁵ Bhaga, alongside Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, is a judge

dātā "You are Bhaga. You are the giver of the gift." So also is I 91.7. Again, the idea is that Soma will be good Fortune for the worshipper in winning the benevolence and beneficence of the gods.

²⁴Cf. AV III 12.4 and AV XIV 1.59, in which Bhaga is called a king, cf. Schlerath 1960a: 21.

²⁵IV 3.5 kathā ha tād varuṇāya tvām agne, kathā divé garhase kán na āgaḥ, kathā mitrāya mīlhuṣe prthivyāi, brāvaḥ kád aryamne kád bhāgāya.

before whom Agni will speak on behalf of the worshipper.

Why should the god of fortune be included as a divine king, judge, and Āditya like Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman? A possible answer is suggested by VII 41.2, in which Bhaga is called the "son of āditi who is the ordainer."²⁶ The epithet vidhartár "ordainer," describes Varuṇa ādityá in II 28.4ab prá sīm ādityó asṛjad vidhartāñ, ṛtām síndhavo váruṇasya yanti "As the ordainer, the Āditya has discharged these (waters). The rivers move (in obedience) to the truth of Varuṇa." The things distributed are, of course, quite different in these two passages, but in both a commanding god dictates the proper place for something. Perhaps Bhaga is best seen as a lord who distributes goods to his people, a chieftain who ordains the proper apportionment of wealth. To VII 41.2 compare VII 38.6:

VII 38.6 ānu tán no jāspátir mamsīṣṭa
 rátanam devásya savitúr iyānāḥ
 bhāgam ugró 'vase jóhavīti
 bhāgam ānugro ádha yāti rátanam

The lord of the family should concede to us that treasure of the god Savitar when he is entreated (for it). The mighty man summons Bhaga for help. So also the weak man beseeches Bhaga for treasure.

Here Bhaga is called the leader of his people, and is a superior to whom both the poor and the powerful must turn. Compare also the passages cited above where Bhaga is called the "compeller" of wealth. These imply that Bhaga is the ruler over wealth and can dispense it as he sees fit.

Rule over the distribution of wealth, however, should not alone cause a god to be called an Āditya. Bhaga should be an Āditya only if this function

²⁶vidhartár means literally "one who organizes something by putting its parts in their proper place or places," thus "one who ordains the proper place." Cf. II 38.4c . vy ṛtūñr adardhaḥ "(Savitar) ordains the seasons" and IX 47.4ab ... vidhartāri, víprāya rátanam ichati "(Soma) seeks to ordain treasure for the inspired (priest)."

of distributing wealth somehow relates to the maintenance of society and the principles which govern it. I believe it does so, for Bhaga's distribution of wealth and good fortune is not based on chance or on royal whim. Rather, Bhaga gives his bounty to those who merit it:

VII 66.4 yád adyá sūra údité
-nāgā mitró aryamā
suvāti savitā bhāgah

If today, at the rising of the sun, Mitra and Aryaman (will testify that we are) without offense,²⁷ Bhaga the compeller will compel [= send] (good things to us).

The translation of line c follows closely the parallel expression found in V 82.3ab sá hí rátnāni dāsūse, suvāti savitā bhāgah "For Bhaga the compeller will compel [= send] treasures to the one who serves (him)." In both passages, the idea is essentially the same: Bhaga will honor and reward the man who acts without offending. But it is in VII 66.4, that this is most dramatically articulated. There, the gods of alliance and custom report to Bhaga, the judge, that the poet is innocent. Bhaga, recognizing that innocence, will then give to the poet the bounty he has earned, just as Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman also reward the righteous man. Thus, since Bhaga is a chieftain or a leader of some sort, and his rule functions directly in support of the principles which govern men, he is occasionally an Āditya.²⁸

²⁷This translation follows Geldner's interpretation that ánāgāh = ánāgasah. See his note in RVÜ II: 241.

²⁸I can not leave the subject of bhāga without at least mentioning the special relationship Bhaga shares with Aryaman. Whereas Bhaga appears with Varuṇa or Mitra each only once, he accompanies Aryaman 11X in the RV and AV. The basis for this association is the role which the two gods play in the marriage and founding of a household. In the context of marriage, bhāga is "good fortune," especially in child-bearing. Cf. V 7.8cd suśūr asūta mātā, krāṇā yád ānāsē bhāgam "Easily bearing, his mother bore (Agni) once she (contd.)

Amśa

The last god of II 27.1 is Amśa, the god of the "share." In the RV, besides II 27.1, Amśa is mentioned as a divinity only in V 42.5 devó bhāgah savitā rāyó amśah... "(Let) the god Bhaga, the compeller of wealth, (let) Amśa (help us)" and in II 1.4 tvám agne rájā varuṇah... tvám mitró bhavasi... tvám aryamā... tvám amśo vidáthe deva bhājayúh "O Agni, in the ceremony you become king Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, and Amśa, who brings a portion, o god."²⁹ His appearance in the AV is equally infrequent. He is mentioned in that text only twice: AV VI 4.2 "Let Amśa, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, and Aditi, let the Maruts... protect us" and AV XI 6.2abc brūmó rájānam varuṇam, mitram viṣṇum átho bhāgam, amśam vívasvantaṁ brūmah "We speak to king Varuṇa, Mitra, Viṣṇu, and so also to Bhaga. We speak to Amśa and Vivasvat." In these passages, Amśa is named all but once with Bhaga and even in the one exception, RV II 1.4, the function of Bhaga is suggested in the epithet bhājayú "who brings a portion." So also amśa "share" complements the root bhaj "apportion," from which bhāga is derived, in AV XI 1.5c amśam jānīdhvam ví bhajāmi tām vah "Know the shares. I apportion these to you" and RV X 106.9d amśeva vo bhajataṁ citram āpnaḥ "Do you, who are like two shares, (both)

successfully attained good fortune." So also, I 163.8; II 17.7; X 11.6, 39.3. As a god, Bhaga is the personification of such good fortune in marriage: AV XIV 2.15cd (= 21cd) sinīvāli prā jāyatām bhāgasya sumatāv asat "Sinīvālī, let (my wife) bear offspring. She shall be in the favor of Bhaga" (cf. AV II 36.4, 5; VI 82.2; XIV 1.51, 53, 54, 59, 60). Thus, as Aryaman establishes a marriage, so Bhaga blesses it: X 68.2b (sām) bhāga ivéd aryamānam nināya "... like Bhaga (Fortune) (unites) Aryaman (Custom) (with cows)" (cf. also X 85.23, 36; AV XIV 1.34, 2.13. But this association with Aryaman can not be the sole basis for Bhaga's assumption of the status of an Āditya, since Bhaga is occasionally linked to Mitra and Varuṇa in the complete absence of Aryaman.

²⁹For V 86.5, see note 30.

apportion a bright reward to us."³⁰ Elsewhere the "share" is brought or won by Indra (I 102.4, cf. III 45.4; VII 32.12), by Etaśa (II 19.5), or by the Aśvins (I 112.1, cf. V 86.5), or belongs to Soma (X 31.3). It is not used with Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

Thus, the inclusion of Aṃśa as an Āditya is not due to any close relationship between Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman and him. Aṃśa is, however, closely associated with Bhaga. Indeed, if Bhaga is Fortune, then Aṃśa is best regarded as the Share which Fortune brings.³¹ The only reason for his inclusion in II 27.1 is this close relationship with Bhaga.

Savitar

A god called savitár is also an Āditya according to VIII 18.1, 3:

VIII 18.1 idám ha nūnám eṣām
sumnám bhikṣeta mártyaḥ
ādityānām apūrvyaṃ sāvīmani

May the mortal now share in the unprecedented favor of these Ādityas under their compelling command.

VIII 18.3 tát sú naḥ savitā bhāgo
varuṇo mitró aryamā
śarma yachantu saprátho yád ímahe

Let savitā bhāgaḥ, Varuṇa, Mitra and Aryaman offer us that extensive shelter which we beg.

³⁰ Geldner (RVÜ III: 326) translates: "... wie Aṃśa teilet uns ansehnlichen Lohn zu!" The personification of aṃśa, if any, is slight. Cf. V 86.5cd ārhantā cit puró dadhé, aṃseva devāv arvate "I have placed just these two worthy ones before me, the two gods, (who are) like two shares for the courser." That is to say, the two gods are a prize worth winning for men, just as a race with a doubly large stake is especially worth winning.

³¹ I prefer this explanation of the relationship between Bhaga and Aṃśa to that proposed by Thieme (1970a: 401): "[bhāga] ist der (zegeteilte) Anteil--im Gegensatz zu aṃśa m. der [durch Los, Glück erlangte] Teil."

Bergaigne (1878-83 III: 99) suggested that VIII 18.3ab might be a list of five gods called Ādityas or possibly one of four, if savitā bhāgaḥ is interpreted as a "nom double d'un personnage unique."³² In his brief discussion, he also proposed that bhāgaḥ is a name for the god Savitar, that is, Savitar "qui donne" or literally "qui partage."³³ The reverse of Bergaigne's suggestion, however, is also possible; savitā could be an epithet of Bhaga. There is good precedent for interpreting savitár this way. For example, savitár describes Indra in III 33.6:

III 33.6 índro asmāñ aradaḥ vajrabāhur
ápāhan vṛtrám paridhīm nadínām
devò 'nayat savitā supānís
tāsya vayám prasavé yāma urvīḥ

Indra, in whose arm is the mace, has dug us [the rivers] out. He has smashed away the obstacle, the enclosure of the streams. The god, as a compeller whose hands are good, has led us (out). We wide ones travel at his compelling command.³⁴

Similar also is IV 14.2, in which the sun is called the compeller:

IV 14.2 ūrdhvām ketúm savitā devó aśrej
jyótir víśvasmai bhúvanāya kṛṇvān
āprā dyāvāpṛthivī antárikṣam
ví sūryo rasmíbhiś cékitānaḥ

The heavenly compeller has reposed his beacon on high, making light for every creature. The sun, now that it has appeared, has filled heaven and earth and midspace with its rays.³⁵

³² Similarly Hillebrandt 1927-29 II: 87, 93.

³³ Bergaigne 1878-83 III: 39.

³⁴ There is no reason to take savitár here as god Savitar as Geldner (RVÜ I: 373) does. It is Indra who has both smashed the obstacle and released the waters. Cf. VIII 100.12cd hanāva vṛtrám riṇácāva síndhūn, índrasya yantu prasavé vísr̥ṣṭaḥ [Indra says to Viṣṇu:] "We two shall smash the obstacle. We two shall release the rivers. Let them discharged at the compelling command of Indra, go." So also X 111.8

³⁵ Cf. VII 63.2 where Sūrya is called prasavitár.

Since savitár can be an epithet, savitá bhágaḥ could mean "Fortune the savitár," and therefore VIII 18.1, 3 might not refer to the god Savitar as an Āditya. Nevertheless, the concept represented by savitár is in any case associated with the Ādityas, and must be explained.

Indian tradition and western scholarship agree that savitár is derived from the root sū "impel" and hence means "impeller." According to Macdonell (1897: 34), Hillebrandt (1927-29 II: 106ff.), and v. Schroeder (1914-16 II: 7f.) savitár is an epithet of the sun, the "impeller" or "stimulator" of life and action in the world. Oldenberg (1897b: 473ff.; 1905: 253ff.), however, argued that Savitar is actually the personification of the idea of "impelling" and that the use of this word as a name for the sun is a secondary development. I agree that Savitar is the personification of an abstract concept, but to see Savitar only as an "impeller" who puts things in motion does not completely account for his character in the RV. Savitar is really more a "compeller," a "dictator," who not only sets things into motion but who also brings them to rest and who directs the course of activities in the world.

Most striking is that Savitar both arouses and quiets the world at his bidding. Sometimes the poets describe these two sides of Savitar's character by contrasting prá sū in the sense of "compel (to action)" with ní víś "settle down, stop" and applying them both to the activity of Savitar. Examples are VII 45.1d niveśāyaṇ ca prasuvāṇ ca bhūma "(Savitar) who brings to rest and who compels (to action) the earth..." and VI 71.2cd yó víśvasya dvipádo yás cātuspado, niveśane prasavé cāsi bhūmanah "... (Savitar), you who are pre-eminent in the stopping and compelling (to action) of every two-footed and four-footed creatures and (indeed) of the (whole) world" (cf.

II 38.2). Elsewhere, he brings people to rest: I 35.2ab á kṛṣṇéna rájasā vartamāno, niveśāyann amṛtam mártyaṃ ca "Turning hither across the dark region, stopping both mortal and immortal, (Savitar)... " (Cf. also VI 71.5). Such a description would be out of place if Savitar were only an "arouser," for here he does not put things in motion, but rather causes things to stop.

Savitar does not simply stimulate action; he regulates it. He is a figure of authority to whose commandment nature, man and even the gods must submit. In IV 53.2, he is called the "upholder of heaven and earth" (divó dhartá bhūvanasya), that is, he who has established them according to his will. In much the same way, he is the god who fixed heaven and earth in their permanent places according to X 149.1ab savitá yantrāih prthivīm arampād, askambhané savitá dyām adṛmhat "With his controls Savitar has halted the earth. Savitar has grounded the heaven firmly in (space) which needs no support." Since he is the organizer or creator of the world, all nature falls under his sway: VII 45.2d súras cid asmā ánu dād apasyām "Even the sun has conceded (authority over) his [= the sun's] activity to him." And similarly, all creatures are obedient to his will: V 82.9 yá imā víśvā jātāny, āsrāvāyati ślókena, prá ca suvāti savitá "It is Savitar who makes all creatures here (in this world) hearken to the rhythm (he sets for them) and will compel (them to follow it)." Savitar sets the tempo of life and makes certain that all living things step to the beat he creates for them.

Even the gods are subject to his will according to V 81.3ab yásya prayānam ánv anyá id yayúr, devāḥ "... (Savitar), whose lead the other gods follow..." Elsewhere he is described as assigning the gods their various places:

IV 54.5 índrajyeṣṭhān brhādbhyaḥ pārvatebhyaḥ

kṣāyāñ ebhyaḥ suvasi pastyāvataḥ

yāthā-yathā pātayanto viyemirā

evāivā tasthuḥ savitaḥ savāya te

You impel those whose principal is Indra [i.e. the gods] to the lofty mountains (and) for these (men) to homes and dwelling places. Just as flying (birds) spread apart (in formation), so they [gods and men] stand apart (in their fixed places) at your compelling commandment, o Savitar.

Both gods and men assume their fixed positions under the direction of Savitar, just as birds assume a fixed formation as they fly.

Likewise, the diction used by the poets to describe his activity mark Savitar as a governor and ruler. The distinctive functions of Savitar are expressed by savā or sāvīman, which are etymologically related to his name. These words belong to the sphere of commandment and authority. Compare VIII 18.1c (above): Here the phrase ādityānām... sāvīmani functions as the equivalent of the phrase "under the authority (vraté) of the Ādityas" which appears, for example, in I 24.15cd ... vayām āditya vraté tāva, ānāgasah ... syāma "We would be offenseless under your authority, o Āditya (Varuṇa)" and II 28.2a tāva vraté subhāgāsaḥ syāma "We would be of good fortune under your authority, (o Āditya Varuṇa)."³⁶ And just as sāvīman in VIII 18.1 replaces vrata in describing the activity of the Ādityas, so elsewhere vrata replaces sāvīman, savā, etc. in describing the functions of Savitar. Thus, the commandment (vrata) of Savitar is mentioned in II 38.2cd āpaś cid asya vratā ā nīmṛgrā, āyaṃ cid vāto ramate pārijman "At his commandment even the waters are quiet. Even the wind now ceases on its circuit."³⁷ Or again,

³⁶ Cf. also II 27.8, 29.1; III 59.2, 3; V 69.4; VI 16.24; VIII 67.13.

³⁷ Similar are vss. 6, 7 and 9.

sāvīman or savā parallel vrata in successive verses:

X 36.12c śréṣṭhe syāma savitūḥ sāvīmani

We would be under the best compelling commandment of Savitar.

X 36.13 yé savitūḥ satyāsavasya vísve

mitrāsya vraté varuṇasya devāḥ

té saubhagaṃ vīravād gómad āpno

dādhatana drāviṇaṃ citrām asmé

Let all the gods, who are under the commandment of Savitar, whose compelling commandment is real, who are under the commandment of Mitra and Varuṇa, create good fortune together with slaves, attainments together with cattle, and brilliant goods for us.

Clearly the sāvīman of Savitar in vs. 12c and his vrata in vs. 13b are the same thing. Furthermore, to show the power of Savitar's vrata the poet calls him the one "whose savā is real."³⁸ Thus, the diction of the poets confirm that Savitar's sāvīman and savā are not simply his "impulse," but rather represent his "compulse," his "compelling commandment." Savitar is not merely an arouser: he is a dictator and regulator.

If Savitar is a god who commands and who guides action, the reason for his association with the Ādityas poses little difficulty. Rule over the activities of men is characteristic of Ādityas, and this is part of Savitar's dominion as well. Furthermore, the similarity of the sāvīman of Savitar and vrata, which is so characteristically associated with Varuṇa, brings Savitar well within that sphere of ideas represented by the Ādityas. Thus, whether

³⁸ Cf. also IV 53.3-4, in which dhárman "ordinance, principle," vrata "commandment, authority" and sāvīman alternate as terms for the activity of Savitar. This affinity between dhárman and sāvīman is echoed in other passages in which savā and dhárman appear in compounds of very similar meaning. Thus, in X 34.8 and 139.3, other gods are compared to Savitar "whose ordinances are real" (satyādharmā), but in V 82.7 and X 36.13, Savitar is called him "whose compelling commandments are real" (satyāsava).

ih VIII 18.1, 3 savitā bhāgaḥ is "the Compeller and Fortune" or, as I consider more probable, "Fortune the compeller" does not matter. The word savitār is in any case intimately connected with the Ādityas.

Sūrya

Besides Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, the god most frequently invoked by the name ādityā in the RV is Sūrya, the sun. Indeed, by the time of the AV, ādityā in the sgl. refers exclusively to him³⁹ except in one passage quoted from the RV (RV I 24.15 = AV VII 83.3). This must be a late development, for with one possible exception, all the passages in the RV which refer to Sūrya as ādityā (or āditeyā, see below) belong to the youngest stratum.

The basis for this development is probably the role of the sun in Mitra and Varuṇa's rule over the world of men. The sun is the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa (VII 61.1, 63.1) or of Varuṇa alone (I 50.6), through which these gods watch over men. Or, alternatively, he himself watches over the good and evil deeds of men (VII 60.2).⁴⁰ Elsewhere, the sun speaks as an impartial witness of men to Mitra and Varuṇa (VII 60.1) and testifies to their innocence (VIII 62.2). He not only guards the rule of Mitra and Varuṇa, he is also the instrument of their judgement, their "bright weapon" (citrām āyudham, V 63.4), which enforces their commands. Even more, he can become the manifest form of the two gods, which reveals them to men (I 115.5, above pp. 53ff.).

All this suggests that the relationship of the sun to Mitra and Varuṇa is rather different from that of the minor Ādityas. Dakṣa, Bhaga, and Savitar are Ādityas because they resemble Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as gods of abstract

³⁹Also in AV XIII 2.9, 37, the sun is called "son of āditi."

⁴⁰Similar also are VII 60.3 and X 35.8.

principles and in their functions. The sun, however, is no abstraction and does not so much act the role of an Āditya as serve the Ādityas.

An explanation for calling the sun ādityā is suggested by Pāṇini. He teaches that there is another word ādityā, which is derived from ādityā: Pāṇ IV 1.85 dityadityādityapatyuttarapadānnyah "The suffix -ya- occurs after diti, aditi, āditya, and stems ending in pati." According to this rule are formed daitya from dīti, ādityā from āditi, and ādityā from ādityā. This secondary ādityā is an adjective meaning "belonging to the Ādityas." The RV attests it clearly in I 105.16 (cf. p. 267), which refers to the "Ādityan path" (pānthā ādityāḥ), the path of truth protected by the Ādityas. And it is this word ādityā which also describes the sun. Like the Ādityan path, the sun is something which the Ādityas control, which is dependent on them and through which their power is manifest. It is their instrument, even their form, and hence it is ādityā, belonging to them. Thus, when in the AV the sun becomes the Āditya, it has not directly superceded Varuṇa, Mitra, or Aryaman. Rather in the competition between ādityā "guardian of innocence, son of āditi" and ādityā "belonging to the Ādityas," the latter became completely dominant in the sgl.⁴¹ No doubt, however, the decline of the Ādityas in Vedic religion, the transformation especially of Varuṇa, and the continued significance of the sun as a religious symbol encouraged this development.

In the RV, the sun is identified as an ādityā (āditeyā) five times. In none of these instances, do the passages establish the basis for this identification. In several, however, the context does place the action of the sun within the sphere of the Ādityas and thus justifies a description "belonging to the Ādityas." The best example is I 50.13:

⁴¹The two instances in the AV in which the sun is called "son of āditi" (see note 39) mark the inevitable conflation of the two words ādityā.

I 50.13 úd agād ayám ādityó
vísvena sáhasā sahá
dviśántam máhyaṃ randháyan
mó ahám dviśaté radham

Now the ādityá has risen with his every strength, making weak him who is hostile to me. May I not be weak before the one who is hostile.

Here the sun protects the worshipper from the hostility of another. This is a frequent function of the Ādityas (cf. pp. 266ff.), and thus the sun is considered their instrument.

The same possibility occurs in I 191.9:

I 191.9 úd apaptad asáu sūryah
purú víśvā nijūrvan
ādityāḥ párvatebhyo
viśvádr̥ṣto adr̥ṣtahá

Yonder sun, burning down all the many (obstructive forces),⁴² has arisen to the mountains, he, the ādityá, who is seen by all and smashes all the unseen.

The sun's destruction of "obstructive forces" again corresponds to the Ādityas' vengeance against offense, guilt, untruth, and other forms of evil (cf. pp. 252ff.).

The last line also echoes the description of the sun as the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa.

A third passage presents a number of difficulties:

I 163.3 ási yamó ásy ādityó arvann
ási tritó gūhyena vraténa
ási sómena samáyā víprkta
āhús te trīni diví bāndhanāni

You are Yama. You are the ādityá, o swift one. You are Trita through your hidden commandment. In the same way as soma, you are divided. They call these your three bonds (of kinship) in heaven.

This verse is quite obscure, as is the hymn as a whole. The hymn is

⁴²In line b, supply rákṣāṃsi. Cf. X 187.3, VII 104.4, and especially AV VI 52.lab ut sūryo eti, puró rákṣāṃsi nijūrvan.

addressed to a horse, identified with the horse of the sun (cf. Geldner RVÜ I: 225) and with the fire (vs. 9). Ādityá here must be a name for the sun. Perhaps when this hymn was composed, ādityá was still a poetic and indirect name for the sun. A certain mysteriousness in the name would complement the references to Yama, king of the dead, and the ancient, but shadowy Trita, and to the enigmatic identification of the horse with them.⁴³

A final verse, X 88.11, tells little about the sun, but is intriguing because there the sun is called āditeyá. Elsewhere in the RV, the suffix -eyá- (with extended grade of the first syllable) is a patronymic/metronymic.⁴⁴ In the young Veda, however, secondary derivatives of various meanings are formed in this way, cf. agní: āgneyá "belonging to Agni." I suspect that āditeyá was invented by this poet as an alternative to ādityá⁴⁵ to mark a contrast with ādityá "son of áditi." It is a late verse and therefore an unsurprising exception to the normal Rgvedic meaning of derivatives in -eyá-.

Summary

Thus, though no gods in the RV other than Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are characteristically Ādityas, several of them are called Ādityas at least once. Several questions then arise: Why do these gods bear this epithet? And how does this use of ādityá relate to the characters of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman and the interpretation of ādityá offered in the preceding chapter?

⁴³A fourth passage offers no useful context: VIII 101.11ab bān mahāñ asi sūrya, bāl āditya mahāñ asi "Truly you are great, o sun. Truly you are great, o ādityá." The end of vs. 12, however, does describe the sun as "lordly" (asuryā) and the "undeceivable light" (jyótir ādābhyam), which recall descriptions of the Ādityas (pp. 259ff.).

⁴⁴Cf. Altind. Gr. II, 2 §341c, p. 509.

⁴⁵Cf. YV nādeyá alongside nādyá.

In several cases, the word ādityá appears in contexts in which other gods exercise those functions characteristic of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman when they are called Ādityas. Thus, the gods are called Ādityas in X 63 because they are rulers who watch over their subjects and who protect them from evil-doers. In the case of Bhaga, the evidence is less clear, since the passages in which he is an Āditya do not supply an adequate context to determine why this is so. But elsewhere Bhaga acts as a chieftain who rewards those whom he chooses, and he chooses those who act properly. This function is comparable to the Ādityas' gifts of protection and prosperity for the man who acts according to the principles which Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman represent, and therefore it is possible that Bhaga is an Āditya because he maintains society.

Besides Bhaga, RV II 27.1 also mentions two other gods as Ādityas who are not usually called by this name. These are Dakṣa and Aṃśa. Both are not only rarely Ādityas; they are, in fact, rarely personified at all. Dakṣa, at least, does enter into close relationship with Mitra and Varuṇa. These latter two gods are often said to have "skill," to be "sons of skill" and those "whose father is skill." It is this "skill" of Mitra and Varuṇa which has been personified in II 27.1, and because of its association with them, "skill" was allowed to assume the name Āditya so distinctive of these gods. Aṃśa, on the other hand, is closely related to Bhaga. It is probably the "share" which "fortune" brings. In any case, because Bhaga is an Āditya in II 27.1, Aṃśa is included as well.

Another name which is quite understandably associated with the Ādityas is that of savitár. In VIII 18.1, 3 savitā bhágah is listed among the Ādityas. Whether this means "Compeller and Fortune" or "Fortune the compeller" is not certain, although the latter is more likely. In any event,

the concept which savitár represents belongs to the sphere of ideas associated with the Ādityas. The word savitár is best understood as "compeller," that is, one who governs the activities of all creatures through the authority of his "compelling commandments" (sávīman, savá). This is very similar to the Ādityas' rule over men, and so it is no surprise that the epithet Āditya is applied to a "compeller."

The late RV, however, shows several important innovations in the use of the term ādityá. First, Āditya came to be employed in the recurrent expression "Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus" as the name for a sub-group of the gods. This use of the term probably evolved through an attempt to systematize the R̥gvedic pantheon. It is thus an innovation which provides no information about the meaning and employment of the word with Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. Second, Sūrya, the sun, is called an ādityá. As a description of the sun, ādityá is actually a derivative of ādityá which means "belonging to the Ādityas." The sun is an ādityá in this sense because he is the instrument of their will and the manifest symbol of their power.

In examining the use of Āditya with gods other than Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, we can thus see it both as a descriptive term and as a name. When it describes the three gods, it connotes rule over the activities of men. It can suggest this same thing when other gods bear this epithet: Bhaga acts as a king who distributes fortune with justice. But the word is so distinctive of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman that a god whom the poets wish to associate with the three may also receive this name. The lone verse in which Indra is an Āditya is an instance of this development. The attenuation of the word as a descriptive term is carried to completion when it comes to designate an unspecified group of gods, for there it has no meaning and even very little reference to Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

My aim was to understand the natures of the gods called Ādityas, especially the three gods who characteristically bear this epithet: Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. To do so, I began with an analysis of each of these gods individually.

The nature of the god Mitra is determined by the concept denoted by the neuter noun mitrá. Following in the tradition of Meillet, I have interpreted this word mitrá as "alliance," that is, as designating any agreement concluded between two parties or, more generally, any relationship between individuals or groups which involves mutual obligations and reciprocal responsibilities. In the RV, mitrá is used of treaties of peace, the wedding contract, and even the sacrificial compact, according to which men and gods pledge mutual support. There is also a mitrá m., which means "ally," that is, a person who is under an alliance or who acts as the mediator of an alliance.

Mitra, therefore, is the god of alliances, who ensures that allies will abide by their agreements. He is a king, who watches and governs men, and an angry avenger against those who violate the alliances he sanctifies. This view of Mitra differs substantially from that of the later Veda. In those texts, he becomes a divine ally, who helps everyone because everyone is his ally and who mediates conflict and dislocations of all sorts. As such, he becomes a peaceful, benevolent god, to whom vengeance and wrath are foreign.

The interpretation of Varuṇa posed a much more difficult problem than that of Mitra, for the meaning of his name is not so clear. Following Meillet and Schmidt, however, I suggested that várūṇa is related to vratá;

indeed, that Varuṇa is the god of vratá. In developing this idea, the first task was to establish the meaning of vratá. According to my analysis, this term means "commandment" or "authority," that is, the dictate of a superior to an inferior. The evidence that Varuṇa is the god of commandments is two-fold. First, the word várūṇa appears in contexts in which it is better understood as meaning "commandment" or ambiguously "commandment" and "Varuṇa, god of commandments" than as a proper name alone. Second, the functions of the god Varuṇa are those expected of the god of commandments. He is ruler over the world of men through the authority of his commandment, and he is also the lord over the natural world, especially the rain and the waters. This dual role of Varuṇa as the authority over nature as well as over society is reflected in his association with the truth (ṛtá). The truth is the operative principle which governs the actions of the universe, the order of the ritual, and the canons of proper speech and behavior, and Varuṇa is the authority which commands obedience to this truth. Thus, Varuṇa's lordship over nature is not divorced from that over men, for the conception of nature as functioning according to the truth and under the god's authority serves to impress upon men the idea of Varuṇa's power and to warn them against any attempt to infringe his rule.

Again, the Varuṇa of the later Veda is rather different from that of the R̥gveda. Two characteristics dominate the descriptions of him there. First, he appears as the god who binds and seizes. The more ominous aspects of his character even develop to the point at which he becomes a terrible, threatening god, who catches victims in his fetters of disease and misfortune. Second, he becomes a god of the waters, who has his characteristic dwelling place amid the waters. These two images of the god originate in R̥gvedic descriptions of Varuṇa, but develop rather far from the R̥gvedic conception of the god.

Like that of Varuṇa, the interpretation of Aryaman depends upon the proper understanding of his name. The name aryamán derives from arí and arya. As Thieme has established, arí means stranger, but contrary to him, I maintained that arí is not any stranger. Rather, he is another member of the same culture as the Vedic poets, one who is neither a part of the family nor a foreigner. The word arya is an adjective which describes such a person who shares in the Vedic culture, a man who is "civilized." Therefore, the appellative meaning of aryamán must be "custom" or "civility." That is to say, aryamán designates the principle which governs men insofar as they are "civilized" and thus maintain the traditions of Vedic culture. Again, direct evidence substantiates this interpretation. In a few verses in the RV, aryamán could mean "custom" or "ally by custom, countryman," and Avestan airyaman designates those who share the same customs or, in one instance, an ally of some sort.

The functions of Aryaman in the RV support this view of him as the god of customs. First, like Mitra and Varuṇa, Aryaman opposes those who do not act in accordance with proper social behavior and rewards those who do. Second, he is particularly involved in the organization and maintenance of the household, which is exactly the area in which custom and hence the god of customs would be expected to play their greatest roles.

These discussions of the individual characters of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman indicated the reason they are so closely associated with one another. They are the guardians of the fundamental principles which organize and govern society. The activities of men are ruled by the alliances into which they enter, by the commandments of those in authority, and by customs transmitted through generations. Thus, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, the gods of

alliances, commandments, and customs, complement one another and share a common responsibility to protect the principles they represent.

After establishing the basic characters of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman, I next turned to their distinctive epithet Āditya. Since it is so characteristic of these three gods, ādityá ought to indicate the common element which binds the three together and sets them apart from the other gods of the RV. In order to discover its meaning, I began with an analysis of the word ādityá itself. As recognized by both modern and traditional scholarship, ādityá must be related to áditi. The form itself was certainly interpreted by the poets of the RV as deriving from áditi, for it is used interchangeably with the phrase "son of áditi." Formally, the relationship between ādityá and áditi offers two possibilities. First, that ādityá is a metonymic derived from áditi and second, that it is a secondary adjective built to a common noun áditi. That Āditya means the same as "son of áditi" does not preclude the second possibility, because the phrase "son of áditi" could be of the type sūnúh sáhasah, that is, one which states the principle, not the parent, from which a god derives his being. But this interpretation of "son of áditi" and the possibility that ādityá is an adjective rest on the supposition that áditi does designate some principle or concept.

In the chapter on Aditi, I tried to demonstrate that áditi means "innocence, blamelessness" and that Aditi is the goddess and the personification of innocence. The best evidence for understanding áditi as innocence is its frequent juxtaposition to ánāgaḥ "offenseless," to which it must be similar in meaning. Thus, the two words anāgāstvá "offenselessness" and adititvá "innocence" in VII 51.1 must be parallel both in meaning as well as form. Likewise, the poets pray that they may be ánāgasó áditaye "offenseless for (their) innocence" in I 24.15 and V 82.6 or that they may be ánāgaḥ...

áditeh "offenseless because of (their) innocence" in VII 87.7.

If áditi means "innocence," then the goddess Aditi must be the goddess of innocence. The functions of Aditi not only support this interpretation but even indicate that she is occasionally Innocence personified. Thus, the idea that the innocent man prospers is also expressed by saying that the goddess Innocence bestows protection and aid on the offenseless man. Or again, the goddess of innocence is even described by the same adjectives which are used of the innocent man.

In the course of time, however, the conception of Aditi changed. She became less the personification of innocence and more the symbol of motherhood. The roots of this development lie in the phrase "son of áditi," which describes Mitra and Varuṇa. From it originated the idea that Aditi was a mother goddess, and eventually she became the primal mother of both gods and men.

This study of áditi established the possibility that ādityá was a descriptive term which in some way related Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman to the concept of innocence. The next step was to examine the contexts in which the word appears to see if a more specific meaning could be determined. My conclusion was that Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman are often called Ādityas when they act as lords and judges over the actions of men. They have the power and responsibility to oppose evil and to punish those who do evil, but they protect and prosper those who adhere to the principles they represent.

The Ādityas' functions are comparable to those of the Indian king as described in the Epics and Dharmasāstra literature, for it was also the duty of the human king to safeguard the social order. Although evidence for R̥gvedic times is lacking, in all likelihood the king was at that time also the fore-

most judicial authority. Thus the role of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman as Ādityas is probably a projection of this royal function.

Putting these conclusions together with our observations on the word áditi, I suggested that ādityá means "upholding innocence." If so, then this epithet reveals the common and fundamental nature of these gods as sovereign judges.

I next turned to the use of Āditya for gods other than Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. In some cases, these gods are called Ādityas because they exercise those functions characteristic of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. Thus in X 63 the gods in general are praised as rulers who protect their subjects from evil-doers, and therefore they are Ādityas. Similarly, Bhaga, the god of fortune or Fortune personified, is apparently an Āditya because he is a chieftain who prospers those who act properly, and the name savitár "compeller" becomes associated with the Ādityas because a god called savitár is one who compels activities of men to conform to his commandment.

The designation of other gods as Ādityas is somewhat difficult. Amśa and Dakṣa are probably Ādityas in II 27.1 because they are closely associated with gods who are more characteristically Ādityas. Thus, Amśa "Share" is normally invoked in the company of Bhaga, and Dakṣa "Skill" is the personification of the skill of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Aryaman. That Amśa and Dakṣa govern abstract concepts like Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, and Bhaga also contributed to their being called Ādityas.

In the late RV, however, a rather different employment of Āditya develops. First, the name Āditya comes to be used in the expression "Ādityas, Rudras, and Vasus" for a subgroup of the gods. In this employment, there is no indication that the poets attach any real significance

to the term Āditya. Like Rudra and Vasu, it is simply a name for a wholly undefined category of gods. Second, in the singular, ādityā becomes the designation of the sun. This term ādityā is an adjectival derivative of Āditya and means "belonging to the Ādityas." He receives this name because the sun is the instrument of the Ādityas' rule and a symbol of their presence.

Final Perspectives

It is unlikely that the whole of the early Vedic people's religious life and beliefs was encompassed by the RV and the cult it represents. Nonetheless, the rituals and hymns of the R̥gvedic worship express a wide range of religious experience and concerns. Through them, these people found the means to deal with the uncertainties of life, to understand their world and their place in it, and to express their deeply felt emotions and moods. Not all of these concerns are reflected in the worship of the Ādityas. Rather, there is here an emphasis on one aspect of life and on one of the basic problems which humans confront. This is the fact that he lives in a society with other men.

People have needed principles to which their behavior will conform, and these standards of conduct become more compelling if they are invested with divine sanction. It is above all the Ādityas which provide such divine authority for the social order. The powers and presence of the gods of commandments, alliances, and customs mean that the principles which govern human life are established by the gods. Thus, though the worship of the Ādityas ended as an important part of Indian religion, the tradition repre-

sented by them persists still in the ideal of the sanātana dharma. For, like the dharma, the Ādityas made the Indian way of life holy and the society governed by them sacrosanct.

But the social structure is not only maintained through the power of the gods. It is an authentic and legitimate way of life because it reflects the very structures of heaven and earth. Thus, the status of the king as judge of his people corresponds to that of the Ādityas, and thereby his position and authority are established not by his power alone but are grounded in the nature of things. It is right and proper that the king should exercise authority because the political structure conforms to the heavenly structure. Or, even more importantly, that the laws of men and of nature are not distinct but are actually expressions of the same truth (ṛtā) shows that the values of society are no more arbitrary nor any less necessary than the principles of nature. Both are equally authoritative.

But the Ādityas are not only significant for society as a whole. They also have an importance for every individual in the society. Life becomes meaningful as it becomes predictable. Fear before the irrationality of nature and of man diminishes with the conviction that fortune and misfortune are not blind, and that men will eventually see the proper consequences of their actions. It is the function of the Ādityas to ensure that this will be so. If a man prospers, he understands that his faithfulness to the ways of righteousness will continue to sustain that prosperity. If a man suffers, this suffering is made bearable by the assurance that there must be significance to it and that there are powers to whom appeal can be made. Sometimes the purpose of these powers is unclear and their workings mysterious. Vasiṣṭha, the poet of VII 86, feels that he is being punished unfairly, but he also has the confidence that Varuṇa can listen to his pleas and that

there is access to Varuṇa, as to the gods in general, through the rites of the Vedic cult. He understands that the god does not act arbitrarily, but in accordance with enduring principles which men -- or at least the sages among them -- can know.

Again let me emphasize that in stressing the social meaning of the worship of the Ādityas, I do not deny that there are many other facets of Vedic religion, which express many other religious concerns. But I do protest against the one-sided characterization -- or rather caricature -- of Vedic religion as merely "nature worship." The Vedic poets do express wonder and awe before the processes of nature, but this is far from all that they express. In spite of the numerous studies which have emphasized these other aspects of Vedic religion, it is disappointing that many of the general histories of Indian religion still fail to acknowledge the complexity and sophistication of the RV. I hope that this study might give greater impetus to its reevaluation and appreciation.

Abbreviations of Periodicals and Series

ABORI	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
BSL	Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. London.
GGA	Gottingische Gelehrte Anzeigen
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series
IF	Indogermanische Forschungen
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly
IIJ	Indo-Iranian Journal
IL	Indian Linguistics
JA	Journal Asiatique
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JMS	Journal of Mithraic Studies
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
KZ	Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft
MIO	Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung
MSS	Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft
NG	Nachrichten von der Kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse.
OLZ	Orientalistische Literaturzeitung
RHR	Revue de l'Histoire des Religions
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften.
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

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Subject Index

- āditeyā, 2, 317
- āditi, 8, 192-207, 208, 220, 221, 223, 244, 249, 251, 288, 289f., 296, 323-325; son of, 8, 192-195, 231, 233, 250, 251, 289-292, 301, 305, 314 n., 317, 323, 324
- Aditi, 5, 8, 81, 194, 195, 196-198, 205, 206, 208-221, 231-250, 280, 291, 293, 296, 297, 299, 324; as cow, 216f., 226, 246f.; as earth, 196 n., 233, 237f., 246-249, 250; as mother, 194, 197 n., 212, 215, 231-238, 241 n., 241-250, 293, 324
- adititvā, 207, 241, 259, 323
- ādityā, 1, 6-8, 66, 192-195, 251f., 256-259, 277, 289-292, 293, 296, 297, 301, 317, 319, 323, 324f.
- Ādityas: identity of, 1-3, 90, 293-299, 314; number of, 3-6; and vrata, 81, 285; in sgl. as name of the sun, 2, 54 n., 126, 187; Ā., Rudras, Vasus, 294-298
- āgaḥ "offense," 203 n., 252-259, 265, 287
- Agni, 5, 14, 31f., 34, 35, 54, 60, 68, 74, 85, 94ff. n., 103f., 107, 113, 119 n., 125, 127, 130, 139 n., 144f., 160, 194, 200f., 202f., 205, 206, 209, 219, 243f., 253, 262, 279 n., 290, 293, 299, 303, 304, 305; as āditi, 221-231; as mitrā, 35-38, 44, 221; as vāruṇa, 90-92, 127
- Ahura Mazda, 10, 79 n., 144 n.
- airyaman, 153 n., 163-165, 168, 182, 322
- Airyaman, 167, 168-170
- Aməša Spəntas, 10, 170
- amitra, 40
- Amśa, 2, 3, 6, 307f., 318, 325
- ānāgaḥ, 82f., 84, 203, 207, 253 n., 254 n., 258, 271, 306, 323
- anarvān, 217-220
- Añgirases, 148, 179f., 236, 237, 295
- arī, 151-157, 164, 181, 322
- aryā, 151, 154-162, 181f., 322
- ārya, 151, 162 n.
- ārya, 162 n.
- aryamān, 66, 69, 87, 150f., 162-170, 172f., 175, 182, 185-190, 193, 322
- Aryaman, 7, 15, 32, 70, 150f., 170-191, 192, 243 n., 255, 276, 277 n., 288, 306f. n., 322; A. "who gives," 185-187; and Bhaga, 306f. n.; and the phalgunī stars, 183f.; and hospitality, 151, 165f., 175, 184f.
- aryamā, 69, 256
- Āśvins, 42, 81, 118, 161, 299, 308
- bhāga, 300, 301, 306f. n., 308 n., 309
- bhagaḥ savitā, See savitā bhagaḥ
- Bhaga, 2, 3, 6, 32f., 91, 179, 293, 299, 300-306, 308, 318, 319, 325
- Bhṛgu, 37
- bhur, 112
- brāhmaṇ, 50f., 108, 144, 146-149
- Bṛhaspati, 5, 28f. n., 32f., 41, 144, 147f., 189

dākṣa, 194, 195, 243f., 290, 299f.

Dakṣa, 2, 3, 195, 243, 299f., 318, 325

dhārma(n), 55f., 89 n., 90, 106, 175 n., 281-283, 288, 313 n., 327

Dhātār, 6, 181

disease, 97, 99, 129, 197f., 253, 254, 275

dīti, 199, 200, 202 n., 291

druh, 138-141, 259f., 287

énah "guilt," 197, 203 n., 252-259, 265, 287; inherited guilt, 257f.

Indra, 2, 3, 5, 29, 31, 33f., 39-41, 44, 68, 72, 77f., 80f., 103, 144 n., 145, 148, 158, 161 n., 172f., 230, 293, 296, 297, 299, 302f., 304, 308, 309, 319

judge, judgement, 67, 83, 97, 135, 210, 243, 252, 256f., 277, 278, 281, 283, 287, 289, 290-292, 304, 305, 306, 324f., 327

king, 7, 12, 21-23, 29f. n., 40 n., 43, 44, 47f., 59, 60, 66, 67f., 75, 80, 92, 98, 99, 101, 108-110, 115, 116, 127, 143, 145, 146-149, 164, 221, 247, 261, 265, 270, 277-283, 288, 291f., 304f., 319, 324f.; as judge, 67

kṣatrā, 50, 145f., 146-149

Manu, 37, 159, 160 n., 245

marriage, 31-33, 44, 48, 60, 176-181, 183, 256, 306f. n., 320

Mārtāṇḍa, 2 n., 5, 244f.

Maruts, 2, 3, 5 n., 31, 33f., 34 n., 125, 139, 145, 174f., 227, 271 n., 293, 295, 297f.

māyā, 106

Meillet, Antoine, 15, 17f., 25, 43, 65, 68, 69f., 70, 320

miṭra, 17, 25-29, 69

Mithra, 9, 10, 16, 17, 20-22, 43, 60

mitrā, 14, 15, 16-18, 25, 45f., 55, 60-62, 68, 69, 75, 82, 83, 87, 163, 166, 175, 186f., 193, 196, 221, 320; jānya-mitrā, 32f., 48; "ally," 26, 30, 39-43, 44, 45-49, 56, 57, 60, 69, 167, 186f., 255f.; "mediator," 26, 31-33, 35-38, 44, 179; "peace treaty, peace," 25, 29ff., 34, 43f., 46, 47, 59, 60; m., Mitra, and friendship, 16, 17 n., 18ff., 26, 30, 35 n., 43, 44, 45-47, 49

Mitra, 2, 7, 15, 16-24, 30, 31, 33, 34, 43-45, 49-62, 84 n., 116, 134, 137, 170, 187, 192, 210, 211, 255, 271 n., 276, 277 n., 280, 306, 320; and "contract," 15, 17, 23 n., 24f., 27f., 31, 43f., 65, 67; as divine ally, 44, 56f., 61f., 134, 187; as king, 21ff., 51, 98, 116, 320; and light, 16, 53-54, 66; and non-violence, 52, 57; and satya, 51f., 144; and the sun, 16, 63f.; and Varuṇa, 2, 15, 19, 49-56, 59, 61, 62, 63f., 66, 81, 89 n., 90, 96, 97f., 99, 104-110, 114, 137f., 140, 142, 146, 157, 212, 219f., 232, 233, 243, 280, 289, 290, 291, 294, 299f., 314f.

mitrín, 40f. n.

mitryā, 69, 256

ní sad, 94ff. n.

Paṇis, 39

Parjanya, 77, 104 n., 105, 284 n.

pastyā, 94ff. n., 143 n.

path: of Ādityas, 174 n., 189, 219, 266-269, 270, 274, 276; of Aryaman, 150 n., 174 n., 189f., 267; of truth, 158, 266, 269, 274, 276

Prajāpati, 128, 148, 178 n.

protection, 68, 96, 100, 110, 174 n., 212-216, 219, 220, 257-259, 266-276, 283, 287, 315, 324

purohita, 47f., 60, 148

rains, 7, 58, 77, 102ff., 110f., 114f., 123, 124, 127, 142, 174, 182, 227, 228, 233, 235, 277, 288f., 321

Rājasūya, 12, 48, 143f., 145, 148

rakṣ, 76f. n.

ṛṇā, 263, 285

ṛtā "truth," 37, 55, 67, 80 n., 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 117, 120 n., 121, 131-135, 138, 139, 158, 189, 205 n., 216, 221, 232f., 234, 262-266, 278, 283, 286, 287, 304, 321, 327; concept of, 262 n.

Rudra, 97, 136, 294ff., 319, 325f.; Rudras, See Ādityas, Rudras, Vasus

sacrificial compact, 35, 44, 70, 160, 221-231, 244

śasuh, 81

savā, 83, 312f., 319

sāvīman, 82, 259, 312f., 319

savitā bhāgaḥ, 91, 301f., 308-310, 318

savitār, 82 n., 302 n., 308-310, 318f., 325

Savitar, 2, 3, 75f., 80, 81, 83, 91, 113f., 156, 178 n., 209, 210, 302, 308-314

seven, 4f., 37

sóma, 56f., 64, 77f., 120, 121, 137, 166, 226, 229f., 234, 239, 241

Soma, 34, 64, 68, 78, 101 n., 103, 104, 115, 119-125, 130, 145, 230 n., 235, 240, 299, 303f. n., 304, 308; as āditi, 230 n.

son of āditi, See āditi, son of

spies, 96, 97, 98, 120, 127, 139f.

śruṣṭi, 76

sudānu, 279 n.

sun, See sūrya

sūrya, 2, 3, 108, 126, 187-191, 199, 207, 310, 314ff., 319, 326

Sūrya, 2, 5, 42f., 54, 79, 93, 126, 144, 150 n., 206, 309 n., 314-317, 319

Trita, 89, 94ff. n., 121f., 267, 316

truth, See ṛtā

upāsthe āditeh, 233 n., 238-241

urvāta, 68, 69, 79 n.

urvaṭa, 69, 163, 164

Uṣas, 158f., 235 n., 262

vāruṇa, 14, 64, 65f., 67 n., 68, 81-92, 163, 193, 196, 320f.; and vrata, 14, 68, 69, 70, 82ff., 126f.

Varuṇa, 7, 15, 63-70, 92-149, 157, 170, 192, 203, 206, 210, 211, 255, 263, 265, 276, 277 n., 280, 306, 313, 320f.; and binding, 60, 65 n., 66, 97, 98f., 127, 128-142, 197, 211 n., 321; and darkness, 16, 53-54, 64, 66; and dharma, 51, 55f., 106, 135, 145f.; as judge, 67, 97, 135; as king, 50, 66f., 92, 96-101, 111-116, 118f., 123, 127, 147-149, 277 n., 278, 321; as lord of nature, 7, 73, 92-96, 99f., 101, 106, 110f., 114f., 123, 127, 143, 286 n., 321; and the moon, 64; and oath, 67f., 88, 133 n.,

134, 143; as Soma, 64, 119-125;
and the sky, 63f.; and truth
(ṛtá), 67, 72f., 91, 96, 106,
107f., 110, 120 n., 122, 131-
135, 138, 148, 199, 286 n., 321;
and violence, 52, 59, 61, 135ff.,
141, 149; and vrata, 80, 81-
92, 93ff., 99-101, 106, 320f.;
and the waters, 52, 63, 64, 67,
68, 92, 102-126, 127, 128, 142-
145, 289, 298, 321

Varuṇapraghāsa, 128, 142

varuṇya, 60, 88, 131, 136, 137

Vasiṣṭha(s), 99, 115, 116f., 327

vidhartár, 305

Viśve Devāh, 2, 3, 235 n., 237,
246, 257, 293f.

vivrata, 173 n.

vrata, 68, 69f., 126, 243, 272,
312f., 320f.

vrata, 89, 92, 166

Viṣṇu, 34, 41, 309 n.

Vivasvat, 6, 226, 245

waters, 46, 52, 63, 64, 67, 68, 72,
81, 94ff. n., 102-126, 128, 142-
145, 158, 239, 289, 309 n., 321;
heavenly waters, 102 n., 110 n.,
116f.

yat, 23f., 28f. n., 90f., 280

Zarathuṣtra, 9f., 79 n., 153 n.,
163, 168, 169, 182

Text Abbreviations

AB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
ĀpGS	Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra
AV	Atharvaveda
BĀU	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (Kāṇva rec.)
D	Dēnkart
GB	Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
KapS	Kapiṣṭhalakāṭha Saṃhitā
KausS	Kauśika Sūtra
KB	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa
KS	Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā
LāṭyŚS	Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
Manu	Manusmṛti (=Mānava Dharmaśāstra)
Mbh	Mahābhārata
MS	Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā
PB	Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa (=Tāṇḍyamahā Brāhmaṇa)
RV	Rgveda
ŚB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (Mādhyamdina rec.)
TB	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TS	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
Vd	Videvdāt
Vr	Visprat
VS	Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā
Y	Yasna
Yt	Yašt

Index of Passages

Passages on pages marked with an asterisk are quoted and translated in part or in full.

		Veda	
Rgveda		42. 1	*290, *295
		45. 2	*295
I		46. 3	118
2. 7	*194	50. 6	97, 314
2. 8	55	50.13	2, 275 n., *315f.
2. 9	194 n., 300	58. 3	295
13. 2	*225f.	58. 6	*37f.
14. 3	304	62. 7	303
15. 6	300	62.10	81
20. 5	278 n.	63. 5	40
21. 3	34	69. 7	76 n.
23. 4	194 n.	72. 9	*236f.
23. 5	55	73. 3	30 n.
24. 1	*204	79. 3	*107, *174
24. 7	*194	83. 3	*81, *85f.
24. 8	93, 126	89. 3	299, 300, 304
24. 9	*97	89.10	*248f., 250
24.11	97	91. 7	303f. n.
24.14	97, 291	93. 8	*78
24.15	83, 84, 197, *203, 204, 208, *258, 285, *312, 314, 323	94. 2	*219, *222
		94. 6	*222
		94.15	*221f., 230
25. 1	86 n., *87, *101	95. 7	*91
25. 2	86 n., *101	102. 4	308
25. 3	86 n.	104. 6	*207
25. 5	86 n., 97	105. 4	267
25. 7	*94	105. 6	174 n., 189, *266f.
25. 7ff.	93	105.16	174 n., *267, 315
25. 8	*94	105.17	267
25.10	*94, 94ff. n.	106. 7	213 n.
25.11	97, 199	107. 1	275 n., *276
25.12	2 n., *276	107. 2	*213, 296 n.
25.13	97	112. 1	308
25.19	97	113.18	*235 n.
25.20	92, 118	113.19	*235
25.21	97	115. 5	*53f., 314
32. 4	*265	116.13	*81
35. 2	*311	117. 3	*265
36. 5	*89 n.	120. 9	*42
37. 8	271 n.	122. 9	96
40. 7	*94ff. n.	123. 1	151, *158
41. 1	96	123. 4	304
41. 3	96	128. 1	76 n.
41. 4	263f., *268	128. 2	*107 n.
41. 5	269 n.	129.10	*39

I	136. 1	96	4. 3	31, *38	
	136. 2	304	6. 7	32, *36	
	136. 3	2, 23 n., 221, 279 n., *279f.	11.14	*30f.	
	136. 5	*21, *100, *174, *219	17. 7	306f. n.	
	139. 2	194 n.	19. 5	308	
	139.11	296	20. 5	304	
	141. 6	237, 303	23. 1, 3f.	192f.	
	141.10	*303	24.12	81, *87	
	141.11	303	27. 1	2, 3, 277, *298f., 300, 304, 307, 318	
	143. 7	36, 37 n.,	27. 2	*261, 278	
	144. 3	303	27. 3	141 n., *261f., 278	
	151. 2	*41f.	27. 4	261, *263, *284	
	151. 3	300	27. 5	96, *271f.	
	151. 4	300	27. 6	174 n., *267f.	
	152	104, 106 n.	27. 7	232	
	152. 1	96, 108	27. 8	*165, 264, *285f., 312 n.	
	152. 2	*108	27. 9	*269, 270, *286	
	152. 3-5	108	27.11	*269, 270, 295 n.	
	152. 6	*200f., 220	27.12	96, 272, *269, 270, 278	
	152. 7	108	27.13	*270, 272	
	153. 3	*215f., 234	27.14	211 n., *212 n.	
	155. 2	200 n.	27.15	*215, *260	
	156. 1	*41	28. 1	2 n., 110, *118 n., 278 n.	
	161.14	123 n., *125	28. 2	*85, *100, 110, *272, *312	
	162.22	*222, 230	28. 3	97, 110, 233	
	163. 3	2, 126, *316	28. 4	*110, 286 n.	
	163. 4	123 n., *125f.	28. 5	110, 286 n.	
	163. 8	306f. n.	28. 6	110, 112	
	164.30	94ff. n.	28. 7	110, 257 n.	
	164.35	*223	28. 8	100, 110	
	164.51	*103	28. 9	110	
	166.12	243	28.10	97, 110	
	167. 8	*171	29. 1	*258, 285, 312 n.	
	170. 5	*33f.	29. 5	258 n.	
	174. 6	*172f.	31. 1	*294	
	178. 4	*40f. n.	35. 2	151, *160 n.	
	179	256 n.	38. 2	*75f., 80, 311, *312	
	179. 5	*254 n., 256	38. 3	*112	
	184. 3	*117	38. 4	*305 n.	
	185. 3	*212	38. 6-7	312 n.	
	185. 8	*254f., 256	38. 8	123 n., *245 n.	
	186. 3	65 n.	38. 9	312 n.	
	186. 8	34 n.	40. 6	*217, 218, 238	
	189. 1	*200, 201	41. 4	55	
	190. 6	*41	41. 6	2, 278	
	191. 9	2, *316			
II	1. 4	*178f., *307	III	1. 6	103, *113
	1. 7	*302, 303		1. 8	290
	1.11	*225		1.22	290
	2. 3	*94ff. n.		3. 5	103
	4	38		4.11	232 n.
	4. 1	*38		5	56

III	5. 9	36	25. 5	*213
	6. 5	*73, 74	27. 3	112
	6. 9	296	30.24	304
	9. 1	103	33.10	*31
	14. 7	243	34. 8	251 n.
	20. 4	*303	38. 6	32
	20. 5	*294f.	39. 3	210 n., *223, 225 n.
	26. 1	*279 n.		230
	30. 2	*226	42. 2	93
	31. 9	*237	42. 4	*93, 233, 264
	32. 8	81	53. 2	178 n., 311
	33. 1	*239	53. 3	313 n.
	33. 6	*309	53. 4	*76, 80, 313 n.
	36. 5	303	54. 3	256
	45. 4	308	54. 5	*312
	46. 2	39 n.	54. 6	*213
	49. 3	*302	55. 1	211 n., 213 n.
	54.10	278 n.	55. 3	94ff. n.
	54.18	100	55. 5	*30
	54.20	251 n.	55.10	304
	54.21	303		
	55.15	85 n.	V	1. 9
	55.21	30 n.		3. 1
	58. 4	42 n.		3. 2
	59. 1	*23, 58, *84 n.		7. 8
	59. 2	2, 259, 271 n.,		11. 3
		278, 285, 312 n.		16. 2
	59. 3	2, *21, 259, 271 n.,		16. 3
		278, 285, 312 n.		27. 1
	59. 5	2, *23, 280 n.		29. 1
	59. 6	22		31. 5
	59. 8	*21.		33. 5
	62.11	*302		33. 9
	62.17	194 n.		40. 7
	62.18	55		42. 1
	62.27	*300		42. 2
				42. 5
IV	1. 2	263, *278		44. 7
	1. 7	160 n.		44. 9
	1. 8f.	160 n.		44.11
	1.11	*94ff. n.		46. 2f.
	1.17	199		46. 5
	1.20	226 n.		46. 6
	2.11	*200ff., 209, 220		48. 5
	3. 5	205, 304f.		51.11
	3. 6-7	205		51.12
	3. 8	*205, 206, 216 n.		52.13
	3.13	*263		52.14
	4. 3	139 n.		54. 8
	12. 4	197, *206, *252f.		59. 2
	14. 2	*309		59. 8
	16.17	151, *162 n.		62
	18. 2	*72		62. 3
	23.10	*216		62. 6

V	62. 7	*109	12. 5	*263
	62. 8	*199, 202 n., 291	13. 2	37 n., *303
	63	107	15. 2	*37
	63. 1	51, *104	15. 3	290 n.
	63. 2	*104f., 106, 108	15.10	*200f.
	63. 3	*22, *105, 106, 108	16.10	*227f.
	63. 4	*105, 106, 314	16.24	278 n., 285, 312 n.
	63. 5	106, 108, 109 n.	16.44	*228
	63. 6	*105	44.17	40
	63. 7	55, *76f. n., 89 n.,	45.14	40
		96 n., *106	48.14	*178
	65. 2	22	49. 9	94ff. n.
	65. 6	*23	50. 1	*179, 211 n., 304
	66. 2	*99	51. 3	221, 234, *301, 304
	66. 4	194 n.	51. 4	22, 261, 278, *296,
	67. 1	277 n.		*301, 304
	67. 1ff.	289	51. 5	276
	67. 2	22	51. 7	*254, 258
	67. 3	*100, *173	60.11	*201
	67. 9	2	62. 6	*238f.
	68	104	62. 8	*294
	68. 2	108, 113, 289	67. 1-3	96
	68. 4	*300	67. 4	*232, 234, 291
	68. 5	289	67. 5	139, 140
	69. 1	96 n.	67. 8	96
	69. 2	289	68. 3	97
	69. 3	*208f., 289	68. 9	*93f.
	69. 4	2, 96 n., *287, 289,	70. 1	89 n., 92
		312 n.	71. 2	*310
	72. 2	23 n., 55, 89 n.,	71. 5	311
		*90, 96, *100	74. 3	*253
	74. 4	259f.	75.12	*213
	75. 7	151, *161	75.17	*213
	81. 3	*311		
	82. 1	302		
	82. 3	*306	VII	1.15
	82. 6	*82f., *204f., 208,		5. 9
		323		8. 3
	82. 7	313 n.		9. 1
	82. 9	*311		9. 3
	83. 2	*284 n.		10. 4
	83. 3f.	284 n.		11. 3
	83. 5	*77, 80		15.12
	83. 7-10	284 n.		18. 8
	85. 2	*93		18. 9
	85. 3	108, *114, 115, 118		18.10
	85. 4	*114, 115		31.11
	85. 7	97, *255		81
	85. 8	97		32.12
	86. 5	307 n., 308, *308 n.		32.20
	87. 7	*271 n.		34.10
				34.11
VI	3. 1	*91, 92		*115
	4. 4	*85		35. 2
				35. 6

VII	36. 4	*171f., 175	85. 4	*2 n., 264
	38. 1	302	86	327
	38. 4	175, *209	86. 1	92
	38. 6	302, *305	86. 2	84-86, 92
	40. 2	304	86. 5	*98f., 258 n.
	40. 4	213 n., *217, 218	86. 7	151, *157, 172, 175
	41	300	87. 1	93, 126
	41. 1	304	87. 3	97
	41. 2	2, 233, *301, 304, *305	87. 6	*118f.
			87. 7	*84, 97, *208, 243, 323f.
	42. 1	115	88. 3	*116
	44. 1	251 n., 304	88. 4	*116
	45. 1	*310	88. 6	65 n., 97, *253
	45. 2	*311	88. 7	97, 211 n., *238
	47. 2	296	89. 1	97
	47. 3	81	89. 5	89 n., 97, 256
	49. 2	111	93. 7	*210
	49. 3	*111, 199	97. 5	94ff. n.
	51. 1	206, *207, 214, *258f., 323	103. 1	78 n.
			103. 2, 3	102
	51. 2	*1f., 3, 214, *296	104	68
	52. 1	*213f., 259	104. 4	316 n.
	52. 2	*20, 96, 254, 258, 295 n.	104.17	*259
	60. 1	126, 314	VIII 1.34	151, *161f.
	60. 2	314	4.15	290
	60. 3	96, 314 n.	9.12	252 n.
	60. 4	1, 3, 193	12.12	31
	60. 5	*20, 96, *171, 193, 261, *264f.	18. 1	193 n., 259, *308, 309, 310, 314, 312
				193 n., 219, 261, 268
	60. 6	96	18. 2	2, 3, 301, 304, *308, 309f., 314
	60. 8	96, 206, 213 n.	18. 3	
	61. 1	314		
	61. 3	96, *139, 140	18. 4	*214f.
	61. 5	96, *138ff.	18. 5	193 n., *274, 275 n.
	62. 2	126, *206	18. 6	213 n.
	62. 4	*19, 60, 96, *211, 213 n.	18.10	*275
			18.11	*274
			18.12	*257
	63. 1	314	18.15, 17	295 n.
	64	104	18.18	276 n.
	64. 2	106 n., 108	18.19	*20, 96
	64. 3	*157f., 182	18.21	96
	65. 1	96, *157, 160 n.	18.22	276 n.
	65. 2	151, *157, 160 n.	19. 8	38
	65. 3	96	19.14	*224
	66. 2	*195, 299 n., 300	19.16	304
	66. 4	304, *306	19.34	262 n.
	66. 6	100	19.35	22, *278
	66.13	96	25. 3	*232
	82. 5	*31	25. 5	*194f., 289, 300
	82.10	*212	25. 6	289
	84. 2	97, 99 n.	25. 9	96
	84. 4	2 n., *265	25.10	200, 220
	85. 3	97		

VIII	25.17	*99	67.10	211 n.
	27. 4	*215	67.11	*212f., *231f.
	27. 5	94ff. n.	67.12	*220
	27. 6	206, 251 n.	67.13	*260, 278, 312 n.
	27.22	278	67.14	213 n., *261, 276
	31.12	174 n., *219 n., 276	67.15	275 n.
	31.13	*266	67.17	257 n.
	31.14	*38 n.	67.18	213 n.
	31.19	276	67.21	275 n.
	33.14	*156	96. 6	*39, 40 n.
	35. 3	296	100.12	*309 n.
	35.13ff.	251 n.	101.11ff.	278 n.
	36. 3	23 n.	101.11	2, *317 n.
	41. 2	289, 298	101.12	317 n.
	41. 4	298	101.15	*216f., 246
	41. 5	122	101.16	*217
	41. 6	89 n., *121	102. 6	302
	41. 7	*121f.	102.12	23 n.
	41. 8	*122, 298		
	41. 9	298	IX 6. 5	241 n.
	41.10	92, *93	7. 8	304
	42. 1	*73, *93, 118	9. 5	*77f., 80
	42. 2	65 n., 97	26. 1	238, 239, *241
	42. 3	97, 300	47. 4	*305 n.
	44. 4	295	61. 7	251 n.
	46. 5	*274 n.	61. 9	304
	47. 1	*260, *274, 275 n.	63.27	104, 124
	47. 2-3	275 n.	65.23	94ff. n.
	47. 4	*272, 273f.	69. 3	*234
	47. 5	*272f., 274	71. 5	238, 239, *240
	47. 6	195 n., *273, 274	73. 3	*119f.
	47. 7	*273, 274	73. 4	*120
	47. 8	257 n.	73. 7	139
	47. 9	200, *213, 220, 233	73. 8	*101
	47.11	*273, 274	73. 9	120 n.
	47.17	*263	74. 3	104, 235
	48. 2	*230 n.	74. 5	238, 239, *240 n.
	48. 8	*88	79. 3	*153f.
	48. 9	*74f., *86	81. 5	304
	51. 9	*161 n.	86. 8	*124
	52. 3	*34	90. 2	124 n.
	52. 7	2, 3, 5, 296 n., *297	95. 4	*120f.
			97.30	*24, *28f. n.
	54. 3	295	97.44	*124
	54. 5	303	97.55	*303f. n.
	61. 5	*303	104. 3	227 n.
	62. 2	314	105. 3	*227
	65. 9	*154 n.	107.15	55, 89 n.
	67. 1	277f.	108.14	304
	67. 2	275 n.	109. 1	304
	67. 3	*271 n.	112. 1	*79
	67. 5	268, 276	114. 3	3, *4f.
	67. 6	268		
	67. 7	259, *270f.	X 5. 7	238, 241 n., *243, 299 n.

XIV	1.51	306f. n.		5. 6(55:14f.)	133 n.
	1.53f.	306f. n.		6. 6(67:12)	51
	1.59	304 n., 306f. n.		6. 8(68:16f.)	94ff. n.
	1.60	306f. n.		6. 9(69:3ff.)	55
	2.13	*178 n., 306f. n.		6.12(71:8f.)	59 n.
	2.15	*306f. n.		13.20(165:16-166:1)	184
XV	2. 1	295 n.	III	1. 6(8:12f.)	60
				8. 9(108:4)	55
XVIII	3.27	296 n.	IV	4. 2(52:9ff.)	*48
	4.30, 33	246		5. 2(65:11f.)	46
				9. 1(121:10f.)	*55, 56
XIX	15. 6	*30 n., 40 n.		12. 4(190:7)	184 n.
	17. 4	297 n.			
	18. 4	297 n.	TS I	2. 7.f	*56
	32. 8	162 n.		3. 1.i	55
	56. 4	297 n.		3.11.f	*135
Yajurveda				8.10.1	135
				8.10.2	51
				8.10.2.f	*59 n.
KapS XXX	4(141:23f.)	*60		8.11.c	143 n.
XLVIII	17(307:19)	58		8.12.1-2	94ff. n.
				8.12.2.g	55
KS II	6(12:4)	56	II	1. 7.3	53
III	8(27:1f.)	135 n.		1. 7.4	53
VII	11(72:19f.)	52, *59		1. 8.4	*47, 49
	15(78:15ff.)	242 n.		1. 9.2	53, 144
VIII	1(83:12f.)	184		2. 6.2	*133, 134
X	3(127:3ff.)	133 n.		3. 1.5	5 n.
	4(128:9)	129		3. 2.1-2	190
	13(142:3)	184 n.		3. 4.1	184
	13(142:6)	*190		3. 4.1-2	185 n., 187ff.
XI	4(148:3-5)	184, 185 n.			136
		*186		3.13	184
	6(151:5ff.)	245		3.14.4	188
	10(157:14)	53		3.14.4-5.t	*188f., 190
XII	1(180:1ff.)	133 n.		3.14.4-5.u	53
XV	5(212:16f.)	135		4.10.1	52, 144
	8(215:7f.)	59 n.	III	4. 5	129
XIX	6(7:3f.)	*60	IV	2. 1.g	184
XXV	10(118:10)	55		4.10.1-2	242 n.
	10(118:10ff.)	59		5. 6	*60
XXVII	4(142:9ff.)	59 n.	V	1. 6.1f.	147
XXXV	19(65:7ff.)	58		1.10.3	129
				2. 3.3	144
MS I	2.18(28:5ff.)	135 n.		5. 4.1	53
	6. 9(101:12)	184		6.11-12	50
	6.11(104:2)	145		7.15.1	*56
	6.12(104:10ff.)	242 n., 245	VI	1.11.1	136
II	1. 2(2:7ff.)	133 n.		2. 9.1	144
	1. 2(3:10)	*129		4. 2.3f.	57 n.
	3. 6(34:1-2)	*185		4. 8.1	245
	3. 6(34:2)	184		5. 6	144 n.
	5. 6(55:4)	144		6. 3.1	

TS VI	6. 3. 4	144 n.		2. 4.13	136
				3. 1. 2	150 n., 189
VS IV	35	46		3. 1. 4	*247
VI	22	135 n.		3. 2. 5, 6	52
X	7	94ff. n.		3. 2. 7	*57
XXVI	2	162 n.		3. 3. 8	52
Brahmaṇa				3. 3. 9	135, 146
				3. 4.12	144
AB I	8.12, 14, 16	248 n.		3. 5. 9	*167, 170
III	4. 6	52		4. 4. 5	*94ff. n.
	31. 9ff.	248		4. 4.15	148
IV	10	53		4. 4.16ff.	148
V	27. 4	246		5. 1.12	189
VII	9	144f.		5. 2. 8	247
VIII	18	*143		5. 2.12	150 n.
	27. 2	*48	VI	4. 3. 8	131
				5. 2.21	245f.
GB I	4. 7	128	VII	4. 2. 7	248
				5. 2.19	249
KB V	3	128	XI	1. 6.24	*175 n.
	5	144		2. 6. 7	136
XVIII	9	144		2. 6.11	189
	10	144 n.		4. 3.10	145
				5. 3.12	147
PB XXV	10.10	50	XII	4. 1. 9	246
	12. 3	189		7. 2.17	136
				7. 3.12	146
ŚB I	1. 2.23	*239		9. 2. 6	46 n.
	3. 1. 4	246		9. 2.12	50
	3. 1.14	128, 130	XIII	3. 8. 5	144
	3. 1.16	128		4. 4. 1	148
	5. 3.17	49	XIV	4. 2.23	146 n.
	9. 3. 2	189	(=BĀU I 4.11)		
	9. 3.13ff.	189			
II	3. 2.10, 12	52, 59	TB I	1. 2. 4	184, 185 n.
	4. 4.18	50		1. 3. 8	144
	5. 2.34, 36	145 n.		1. 6. 5	248 n.
III	1. 3. 3, 4	245		1. 9. 1	242 n.
	2. 4.18	128, *137, 138		1. 9. 1-3	6
	3. 4.24	46		2. 5. 2	248 n.
	6. 3.19f.	130f.		4. 4. 3	130
	7. 4. 1	*137f.		5. 1. 2	184
	8. 5.10	128		6. 5. 4	*129
	8. 5.11	46 n.		6. 5. 5	52
	9. 1.21	*130		6. 5. 6	144 n.
IV	1. 4. 1ff.	50, 145f.		7. 6. 6	150 n.
	1. 4. 8	57 n.		7.10. 1	52
	4. 5.10, 14	144		7.10. 3	135
	5. 1. 5	130	III	1. 1. 8	184
	5. 1. 6	52		7. 2. 3	58 n.
	5. 5.11	128		7. 2. 4	58
	5. 7. 7	*136		9.16. 2	281
V	2. 1.18	28f. n.		11. 4. 1	51

Sanskrit

ĀpGS	V	3. 8	*177	Manu VII	17	*282, 283
					44	*281, 283
KauśS	XXV	37	134		144	*282, 283
	XXXII	14f.	129	IX	253	*282
	XXXIV	22	180			
	CXXVII	4	129	Mbh XII	60.19	*281f., 283
					91. 3	*281, 283
LāṭyśS	IV	3. 5ff.	162 n.	Pāṇ	IV	1.85
						*315

Avesta

D 60(172).12ff. M13ff. 28 n.

Y	30. 9	*214	Vd VIII	103	163 n.
	30.11	169	XXII	9, 19, 23	168 n.
	31. 4	214			
	31.16	163 n.	Vr II	10	168 n.
	31.18	163 n.			
	32. 1	163 n.			
	32.11	169			
	32.16	168, *169			
	33. 3, 4	163 n.			
	45.11	163 n.			
	46. 1	*153 n., 163 n.,			
		164			
	46. 4	163 n.			
	48. 8	168, 169			
	48.10	164 n.			
	49. 7	163 n.			
	51.17	168, 169			
	54. 1	*167ff.			
	54. 2	*168			

Yt X		9, 10, 20
	18	*20, 163 n.
	26	*20
	30	*23 n.
	35	*20, 263 n.
	47	*20, 60
	78	*23f. n.
	87	163 n.
	116-117	*26f.
	XIII 95	*22f.